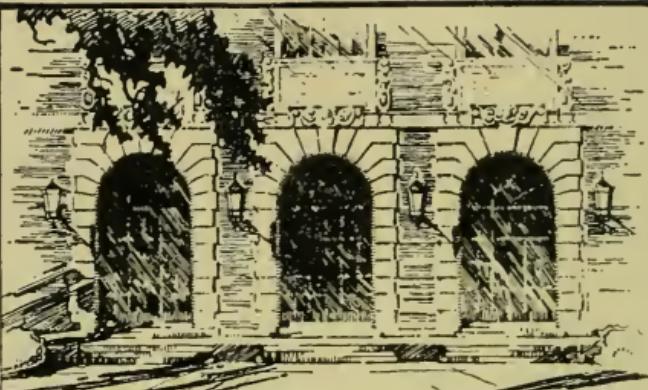


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THE
FRIAR HILDARGO.

A LEGENDARY TALE.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

BY
EDWARD MORTIMER, ESQ.

VOLUME V.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY J. DENNETT, LEATHER LANE,
FOR J. F. HUGHES, WIGMORE STREET,
CAVENDISH SQUARE.

1807.

THE TALE OF A TAIL

BY JAMES THOMAS COOPER

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD H. STURGEON

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Friar Hildargo.

A TALE OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE eventful morning now dawned, and scarcely had the sun gilded the proud turrets of Manstow, when Edmund arose from his couch, and began to array himself for the combat, his breast burning with a desire of punishing Sir Orlando. Greatly pleased with the adventure of the night, he gazed on his

sword, and felt that with it he did not fear any adversary.

Sir Orlando de Vortimer, after he had received the challenge, passed the greater part of the night in revelling with his companions, assuring himself, from the years of Edmund, that he must meet with an easy victory. He had heard of the troops that accompanied him, and which he trusted would depart as soon as the combat was decided.

In the morning early he was informed of the desertion of Barnard and Constantine, who had, it was supposed, released Editha, and carried away the two swords, which were in the empty chamber of the south turret. It appeared to him as a very singular circumstance that they should take those swords with them, as the men were all provided with them. With respect to their

releasing Editha, he conceived it was in consequence of some bribe which she must have offered them.

He now dispatched a herald, with Sir Hugh de Burleigh, attended by four pages sumptuously habited, to inform Edmund de St. Clair of the time and place at which the combat should be held, which was to be on the spacious lawn in front of the castle!

Edmund assented to the proposals of Sir Orlando; yet he felt a wish that the battle should be fought at a greater distance from the castle, knowing so well as he did, how capable Sir Orlando was of committing any base and treacherous act. He, however, determined to take every precaution to baffle his schemes, if he had any, by directing his men to conceal themselves behind the bushes, and in a small grove that

was on the banks of the lake, and there to await the directions of Sir Robert de Bertrand, to whom he assigned that charge.

Meantime the judges appointed by the king attended on the lawn to arrange the lists, and to inspect the ground.

The barriers were adorned with the pennons bearing the devices of the houses of De Vortimer and St. Clair.

Loud blasts of the warlike trumpets now echoed over the surrounding hills. Edmund vaulted on his charger, and attended by Mortimer, as his shield bearer, and his herald, on whose tabard was richly emblazoned the arms of St. Clair. His shield-bearer bore his buckler, which was decorated with his device.

Edmund was himself splendidly adorned. He was completely armed, wearing a habergeon of finely polished steel, his cuishes were of the same metal, his helmet was adorned with a large plume, and by his side hung the invaluable sword of the Baron de St. Clair.

Thus accoutred, with Sir Robert de Bertrand by his side, he entered the arena.

Sir Orlando de Vortimer at the same time issued from the castle gates ; he was armed at all points, and the golden spurs announced him a knight of the first order. He was decorated with the same, splendid crimson surcoat, and on his helmet he wore a plume of the same colour.

The trumpets now blew a blast, and the judges examined the lances with

which the combatants were to engage. They then retired to the seats assigned them. Sir Hugh de Burleigh attended on Sir Orlando as his friend, and for some moments prior to the combat, was deeply engaged in conversation with him.

The embattled walls of Manstow were thickly lined with troops, who pressed on each other to view the combatants. The signal being given for the engagement, Sir Robert de Bertrand and Sir Hugh de Burleigh, left their friends, and stationed themselves on opposite sides of the area.

Sir Orlando now surveyed his antagonist, and was struck with the resemblance his figure had to the sable knight. At length he recollect ed the sword which hung by his side, and he trembled at finding that he had to engage with his former opponent.

It was now too late, or he would have declined the combat, therefore assuming a desperate courage, he rushed on his adversary with the greatest fury. Edmund firmly received his attack, which he warded off, while his own lance spent its force in the air.

They now wheeled about again ; Sir Orlando furiously resolved on the destruction of Edmund, who enraged at his wrongs, thought only of revenge. He now recovered the slight confusion which the sudden onset of Sir Orlando had thrown him in ; and in the second career, he struck the casque of Sir Orlando with such force, that he was nearly thrown out of his saddle seat, while his spear dropped out of his hand.

Edmund now drew his sword, and closed with his adversary, who did the

same ; and now Edmund practised those arts of war, which the friendly Osberne had so well initiated him in, and found he had greatly the advantage over Sir Orlando, whose blows aimed with fury and rapidity, he easily warded off.

A profound silence reigned over the field of combat ; not a word was uttered ; every one gazed intently on the furious combatants ; the blows of their swords resounded on their bucklers ; sparks of fire issued from the sudden strokes.

Sir Orlando, irritated that his might was baffled by the address of a stripling, attacked him with increasing rage, and Edmund, cautious and determined, received his furious blows on his buckler, while his own, fierce and well directed, had nearly cleft in twain the helmet of Sir Orlando, whose armour was hacked through in many places, and the blood

spouted out of the cracks ; suddenly he drew back his steed, and then spurred him on with all his might against Edmund's horse, in the hopes of overthrowing him, and at the same time grasping his sword in both his hands, sought to fell his adversary.

Edmund however received the assault with collected firmness, and again wounded Sir Orlando, whose attack now began to grow faint, while Edmund, who had reserved his strength, sprung on his adversary with such determined resolution, that Sir Orlando shook with fear, and goading his steed, fled into his castle, followed by De Burleigh. Edmund instantly darted after him, but in that instant the portcullis was lowered, and a shower of arrows from the walls forced him to desist.

Enraged to the highest degree, he

turned about, when a barbed arrow wounded his horse; the animal plunged with the pain, and Edmund was obliged to alight and leave him, when the tortured animal bounded towards the camp with the arrow sticking in his side.

De Bertrand, seeing the danger of Edmund, who was exposed to the treacherous darts of the troops of Sir Orlando, gave the signal to the men, who rising up from their ambush, poured on their adyersaries such a sudden shower of the winged messengers of death, that astonished at this unexpected circumstance, they for a while desisted, and Edmund unhurt, retired from the lawn, and calling off his troops, marched back to the camp.

The army Edmund commanded were highly irritated at the base treatment their leader had received, and each

vowed to revenge his wrongs ; assembling round the tent of Edmund, they demanded to be led the next morning to the attack. Edmund came out, and his visor being raised, with much pleasure, thus addressed the justly incensed troops.

“ My friends” said he, “ rein in your generous ardour for a while. The castle of Manstow is strong, and I wait some necessary machines of war ere we can prudently appear before its walls. When I lead you on, it will be, I trust, to victory and glory ; and the day is not far distant ; meantime, if our treacherous foe will come out of his strong holds, we will meet him on the morrow’s dawn.”

Loud shouts proclaimed their approbation of the speech of Edmund, who immediately dispatched a herald to the

walls of Manstow, with a defiance to the troops of Sir Orlando to meet them to-morrow in the plain, on the other side of the lake.

Sir Orlando, however, sent this message :

" Think you, that we will wait on the wishes of your stripling chief. No, let him come before our walls, where our successful archers will soon see him and his forces blackening in the sun."

This answer being brought to Edmund, he smiled with contempt ; and then, that he might do an act of courtesy, he dispatched a message to the Lady Anna, begging to be accounted her champion, and the defender and protector of her rights.

The speedy messenger at the close of

the third day, returned with an answer from the Lady Gertrude, who, as guardian to the Lady Anna, accepted his offers. And now Edmund having received the scaling ladders, grappling irons, and other things he had occasion for, fixed on the next morning for the assault.

Sir Orlando de Vortimer when he perceived that the intrepid prowess of Edmund, would in the end vanquish him, distracted with rage; endeavoured to rush on him, in the hope of overthrowing him.

When that however failed, and a fresh wound which he had received, made him grow faint with the loss of blood. Struck with the sudden impulse of fear, he turned his horse and fled, and his people seeing he was pursued by

his opponent, instantly lowered the portcullis. Meanwhile Sir Orlando, who had stopped under the gateway to recover his breath, and to alight from his steed, no sooner saw Edmund through the grates of the portcullis, than he commanded the archers to attempt to destroy him. Even De Burleigh himself condemned this cruel and base act, and looked on with abhorrence.

Fortunately however, the judges of the combat, and Edmund escaped from the field unhurt, his horse only suffering.

Sir Orlando, after the troops of Edmund had been called off from the attack, faint with the loss of blood, was supported to his chamber, there his battered armour was with some difficulty, and with great pain to himself, taken off, for the iron had been so deeply in-

dented where his wounds were, that it tore them, and thereby occasioned him much agony.

His surcoat was entirely cut to pieces, and his helmet had been robbed of its proud plumage at the commencement of the attack with swords ; his wounds being dressed, he laid down to take a short repose, for he expected that they would be attacked the next morning.

When he received the challenge from Edmund to engage their forces on the plains, he rejected it through fear of the unexampled bravery of Edmund.

During the time that elapsed before Edmund could prepare for the attack of the castle, he busily employed the troops in strengthening it, and neglected nothing which he thought might tend to make it more able to resist the assaults of Edmund's forces.

Meanwhile Sir William Gaveston passed his solitary hours in one of the turret chambers of the barbacan, from the narrow grated casement he beheld the soldiers of Edmund marching through the vallies, and winding over the hills, pitch their tents on the plains beyond the lake, and saw a herald advance to the castle.

The next morning he beheld the engagement, and saw with sensations of delight his friend Sir Robert de Bertrand attending on the champion, who was unknown to him. He witnessed with delight the defeat and flight of Sir Orlando de Vortimer, and saw his unexampled baseness in endeavouring to destroy the knight who had so bravely defeated him.

Hope began to revisit his bosom, that he should soon be released from his

confinement by the victorious arms of the troops; and he waited with impatience for the day of battle, when he trusted he should again be restored to his family.

Edmund de St. Clair had procured a palfrey for Editha, and as she was unable, from her advanced years, to undertake the long journey to Percy castle, and he could ill spare any of his men to attend her there, he bethought himself of the convent where his mother, the Lady Agnes, was; and having questioned her, whether she would remain there till the Lady Anna was restored to the castle, she thankfully acquiesced.

Mortimer and Constantine were charged with escorting her there.

Edmund desired Mortimer to see the Lady Agnes (a thing which he well

knew Mortimer was very solicitous to do), and to acquaint her with what had passed ; for he had so much to do, that it was not possible for him to leave his little army.

Mortimer received his commands with pleasure, and set off with Editha, attended by Constantine. When they arrived at the convent, Mortimer delivered the message of Edmund to the Lady Agnes, who came into the parlour, and was much affected at the sight of the faithful steward.

“ Good Mortimer,” said she, “ I rejoice to see you ; tell me, I pray you, the particulars of the combat.” Mortimer related every circumstance ; reflecting with delight, on the brave comportment of Edmund, while tears of joy stood in his eyes.

The Lady Agnes heard the interesting

tale with mingled emotions of joy and fear, and when Mortimer said that the troops were going to attack the castle the next morning, she turned pale, and sent up a petition to heaven, for the safety of her beloved son.

Mortimer now mentioned the arrival of Editha, and her wish to enter the convent, which the Lady Agnes interested herself with the abbess, to allow her to do.

"Farewell, Mortimer," said the Lady Agnes; "fail not, I entreat you, to give me the earliest intelligence of your proceedings, for until I am assured of the safety of your lord, I shall be truly miserable."

Mortimer faithfully promised, should he be able, to come over himself, and then with a respectful obeisance, the old

man took his leave, and rejoining Constantine, returned to the camp.

The Lady Agnes de Vortimer, the second week after she had entered the convent, was greatly astonished to see Rosalia de Gondoni, the young lady whom she had met in a cottage, when she was on her journey to Manstow castle with the monk Hildargo ; great was their pleasure at this unexpected meeting. And now Agnes related to her the eventful history of her life, which fully accounted for the sighs and distress she was under, when at her cottage ; and she requested to know what it was that had made her seek a residence within the hallowed walls of a convent.

Rosalia with a deep sigh, related to her the death of the peasant and his wife, with whom she lived ; and thus concluded, “ For a long time, I lived

solitary and miserable, indulging the sorrows of my heart, and paying my daily visits to the grave of my beloved mother, and mingling my tears with the earth that covered her dear remains. In one of these visits I was unfortunately seen by Sir Hugh de Burleigh (which I afterwards understood was his name), who happened to be riding past ; he instantly stopped his horse, and gazed on me with some surprise, while I arose from the little seat of turf I had raised by the side of my mother's grave, and retired from the place.

" In the evening, when I had nearly forgot the circumstance, the door of my cottage opened, and the knight entered ; he threw himself at my feet, and seizing my hand, ' Forgive this intrusion,' said he, ' most lovely of your sex ; since I saw you this morning, my

whole soul has been filled with your divine image.'

" ' Rise, Sir Knight,' said I, greatly agitated, and trembling violently; ' if you do not instantly leave my abode, I will alarm the neighbourhood.'

" ' Sweet beauty,' said De Burleigh, ' but hear me speak—only permit me the happiness of telling how greatly I adore you.'

" ' Reserve your insulting discourse,' said I, ' for other ears than mine.' Alas! he knew that I lived alone, and that I could not bring any one to my assistance, and he basely took advantage of it, to insult me with expressions of what was so foreign to his heart, and even had they been the language of truth, I was too much disgusted with his insolence, to receive them.

" Perceiving I was deaf to his words, he started up, and caught me in his arms ; I screamed with the most dreadful affright and horror, but no one came to my rescue ; he dragged me towards the door of my cottage, and assisted by a domestic, whom he called, he placed me on a horse before him, and galloped off from the village. I looked round, but no one was near, the peasants had retired to their beds, and were too fast asleep to hear my cries.

" We travelled a great part of the night, and as soon as the morning began to dawn, I saw his servant galloping on towards us. ' All is ready,' said he, to my persecutor in a low voice. De Burleigh soon after stopped at a small cottage, and an old woman came out to meet us. Never shall I forget the features of this shocking wretch, a few grey hairs hung over her wrinkled fore-

head, her eyes were small and red, her cheeks sallow, and seemed scarcely able to cover her high cheek bones, and her nose and chin nearly met; her dress was squalid, and hanging in rags on her palsied carcase; she opened her toothless mouth to welcome the arrival of De Burleigh, who, getting off his horse, assisted me, who was half dead with terror and fatigue, to alight; he conducted me into the hut which belonged to the old beldame. ‘Mother,’ said he, ‘I commit this sweet beauty to your care.’

“‘‘Monster!’ said I, ‘by what authority do you thus use me?’

“‘‘My dear Rosalia,’ said he, ‘you must learn to forgive the successful enterprize of a man who adores you, and I trust that here too, you will learn to love me.’ Thus saying, he took hold

of my hand and attempted to kiss it, but I suddenly started from him and ran out of the hut as speedily as my frame, enfeebled by the fatigues I had undergone, would permit me.

“ De Burleigh soon followed, and caught me as I was fainting with the agitation I had undergone. When I revived, I found myself seated on a bank with the old woman by my side, and the detested monster who was the cause of my misery. Hastily I turned away from him, but he took hold of my arm and raised me from the ground.

“ ‘ Why will you give so much pain,’ said he, ‘ to a man who adores you ? ’

“ ‘ Let me not hear your detested voice,’ said I, enraged to the last degree, ‘ unless you have a wish to see me die.’

“ Seeing me so dreadfully agitated, he left me, and the old woman took hold of me, but I withdrew myself from her, and walked on towards the cottage, while she and De Burleigh remained at a short distance behind me, deeply engaged in conversation.

“ When I entered the cottage, the old woman bid me walk up some stairs which she shewed me ; I complied, in hopes of losing sight of the vile De Burleigh, and entered a chamber which they led to, the woman following me close behind, and locking the door on me when I was in.

“ I threw myself on a wretched bed, and gave vent to my grief ; and some time after, hearing a noise at the door, I approached the small casement, and saw De Burleigh and his servant depart.

“ I then noticed from the casement, though it was at some distance from the ground, I might be able to effect my escape : I determined at least to attempt it that night, and to run any danger rather than submit to the detested addresses of De Burleigh.

“ Animated with this hope, I partook of the provisions which the old woman brought to me, and anxiously awaited till the shades of night should descend on the earth, when I purposed to put my schemes in execution.

“ It would be impossible to describe the agitation my mind was in, for fear I should not succeed, and that I should again be persecuted by the sight of the unprincipled and base De Burleigh. I often gazed on the distance between the casement and the ground, with some

emotions of fear, lest I should hurt myself in the descent.

“ As soon as it was dark, I took the coverlid from the couch, tied one end to a large chair which was in the room, and threw the other out of the window ; then, with a palpitating heart, I got out of the casement, and holding by the coverlid, descended safely to the ground.

“ With sensations of delight, mixed with apprehensions of being discovered, I swiftly hastened from the cottage, and travelled all night, not knowing whether I was going, and only anxious to increase the distance between myself and the cottage, where dwelt the vile agent of De Burleigh.

“ I reflected that I should not be safe,

were I to return to my own habitation, from the designs of De Burleigh; and deeply did I lament my deprivation of the comforts I enjoyed in my cottage, where I could unseen, lament the loss of my beloved mother, and drop the tear of filial affection on her grave. I then thought it would be most proper for the present to retire to some convent, till the enquiry, which it was probable De Burleigh would make after me, should cease. At the first cottage I came to, I was informed of this convent, to which I instantly repaired."

Thus did the unfortunate Rosalia de Gondoni, conclude her little recital ; and the Lady Agnes, tenderly embracing her, said, " I trust, my dear Rosalia, that I shall soon be in a condition to protect you from the designs of the unprincipled De Burleigh, and that you will remain in the convent till that

happy period arrives. I am not without my hopes, that I shall be enabled to clear the dark imputation which rests on your family, by means of the narrative I mentioned to you, should it not have unfortunately been destroyed, as it was left in the dungeon, in the hurry of our escape."

Thus, in the converse of the amiable Rosalia de Gondoni, the Lady Agnes wore away the time that intervened; till, by the successful efforts of her Edmund, she should be restored to her rights, and the base instrument of her sufferings, have it no longer in his power to oppress her.

CHAP. XLVIII.

THE day appointed for the attack at length arrived. Edmund led forth his forces at the first dawn of day to the siege of the castle of Manstow.

First marched a strong body of archers; immediately in the rear of them was a party of soldiers, bearing hand-bills, axes, and torches; then a party with scaling-ladders. On each of their flanks were a body of the tallest men in the army, carrying bucklers of an extraordinary size. Then marched two heralds, having richly emblazoned on their tabards, the arms of the house

of St. Clair. After them came the pages and standard-bearers. Six trumpeters followed these. Then rode on horses, superbly caparisoned, Edmund de St. Clair and Sir Robert de Bertrand, with their shield-bearers and attendants. After them marched the arbalists and slingers, with the men who were expert at hurling the javelin.

Sir Orlando de Vortimer beheld from the turrets of the barbacan the disposition of the army as it advanced. He immediately ordered a large party to hold themselves in readiness to sally out from the western postern, and to march round the walls, and attack the besiegers on their flanks.

As soon as Edmund's party approached sufficiently near to the walls, the archers let fly a shower of arrows against the troops that thickly lined the

turrets of the barbacan and the crenelles of the outer walls.

The arbalists took their stations on the right and left of the party, and setting up their rests, took their aim at the leaders of the adverse troops ; and then the slingers directed their stony showers against the defenders of the walls.

The assault was made with determined courage. The soldiers were to a man animated with a desire of punishing Sir Orlando and his troops for their treacherous conduct to their leader.

The men who bore the bucklers now raised them high up, and joining them to each other over their heads, formed an impenetrable roof to the arrowy showers. Beneath these the pioneers advanced to the gates ; part endeavoured with their

hand-bills and axes to cut away the gates, while another party with pick-axes began to tear out the great stones of the walls, to effect an entrance that way. The battle lasted a long time. Edmund flew among the ranks of the soldiers, exhorting them to proceed with vigour, and the scaling ladders were set up against the walls, and grappling-irons, to which knotted ropes were fastened, were thrown upon them.

The soldiers now began to ascend, while the party at the gates, under cover of the bucklers, worked at them, while torrents of boiling pitch and water were poured on them from the places made for that purpose; immediately over the gates, those who were endeavouring to tear down the solid stone walls of the tower of the barbacan were assaulted from above, with fragments of the walls which were hurled on them from above,

beneath whose ponderous weight many a gallant warrior lay.

The soldiers armed with short swords, were now ascending the walls on the scaling ladders, and climbing up the knotted ropes, when the party who had sallied from the western portal, now rushed round the walls, and attacked the men who were endeavouring to force the gates, and were scaling the walls.

All was confusion and carnage. Edmund, with a party of soldiers, rushed against them; wherever he came, his sword hewed down whole ranks of the soldiers, meanwhile the pioneers retreated, and running through the ranks of the archers, put them in confusion.

The flank which Edmund attacked soon fled, and the arbalists throwing aside their cross-bows, drew their swords,

and a great part of them fell beneath their successful blows.

Meanwhile Edmund returning, endeavoured to rally the body of his little army, and lead them against the party who advanced from the other side of the castle, and who were attacking the main body, which the pioneers, and men who carried the bucklers, had put to confusion in their retreat.

There Robert de Bertrand steadily resisted their force with a party of spearmen, and at length drove them back.

The great gates of the castle were now thrown open, and a party of troops, headed by Sir Hugh de Burleigh, rushed out. Now the battle raged in dreadful horror. The groans of the wounded were drowned by the heartning peals of the warlike trumpets.

Edmund was encouraging his men, when, seeing at a distance from him De Burleigh, he pressed through the crowd of warriors ; and at length found himself opposite to him. Eagerly he rushed on him ; De Burleigh drew back, Edmund followed ; and having wounded De Burleigh's steed, he was compelled to dismount. Edmund disdaining the advantage this had given him, threw himself off his horse, and drove his unerring sword with such force, that it entered the gratings of the visor, and De Burleigh lay extended on the ground, which was soon dyed with his blood.

Edmund drew out his sword, and catching his steed, again he attacked the foe, and going himself to Sir Bertrand, they fought by each other's side like two young lions. But the battle lasted not long, for the party hearing of the overthrow of their leader, were seized with a

sudden panic, and hastily retreated to the castle.

Meantime the cross-bow-men returning from vanquishing the party that had sallied from the western postern, flew on the retreating troops, and few of them returned alive to Manstow, where as soon as they entered, the castle gates closed on them.

The shades of evening now arose in misty vapours from the east, and Edmund considering how greatly his men had been harassed, ordered the trumpets to sound a retreat, and drawing off his forces, marched them back to the camp.

Parties were ordered out at midnight by Edmund, bearing flags of truce, to inter the dead, carrying torches in their hands, they advanced to the lawn, and began the melancholy task. The loss on the part of Edmund was trifling,

compared with that of Sir Orlando's forces, who thickly strewed the ground.

While the party was thus engaged, they were attacked by order of the treacherous Sir Orlando, and being unarmed, they were nearly all made prisoners, and conveyed into the castle dungeons. This news soon spread itself amongst the army of Edmund, and enraged them almost to madness, and they waited impatiently for the dawn, when they were to renew the attack.

Sir Orlando de Vortimer from the barbacan, beheld the unsuccessful sallies made by his troops with the most dreadful emotions of rage and disappointment. He saw the fierce contest between his friend De Burleigh and Edmund de St. Clair; and when he fell, he sent out a party to carry him into the castle, and descended from the tur-

ret to see him. Hastily the men unlaced his helmet, and taking it off, a most horrible sight presented itself: the sword of Edmund had pierced his cheek, and forcing through the eye, had entered the brain. De Burleigh was no more; his soul was now journeying through the wide ærial space, to appear before a terrible tribunal: terrible indeed to those whose minds are clogged with guilt!

De Vortimer, shocked at the sight, turned away, and ordering the soldiers to disencumber the body of the armour, he went out of the chamber, deeply regretting the only friend he had to consult in his present emergencies.

The time was now too full of events to allow him to think much of De Burleigh; and he again returned to his station on the turret, where he saw his

men confusedly pressing through the castle gates, and heard the trumpets of Edmund sounding a retreat. The night now closed up his view; and he descended to give orders respecting the night watches. That being done, a party of men repaired the breaches that had been made in the gates and walls.

Orlando then directed four men to bear the body of Sir Hugh de Burleigh to the vaults, De Vortimer following them down. The men threw up the ground, while the others held the torches to light their fellows in the work.

When the grave was made, the men lowered the body of Sir Hugh de Burleigh, while the torch-bearers leaned over the grave to illumine the dark recess; Orlando with his arms folded, silently surveyed the melancholy scene;

and when the grave had closed on De Burleigh, he retraced his steps through the chapel into the court-yard. There he learned that a party of the enemy were employed in burying their departed comrades. Enraged as he was at the loss of De Burleigh, he determined to wreak his vengeance on the unarmed party, and accordingly ordered his men to attack and take them ; and this cruel act they performed, after having slain many of them.

Edmund had thrown himself on his couch, in order to rest his weary frame, late at night ; and when the morning came, he impatiently drew up his men, who were burning for the combat. Marching in the same order as they did the day before, they advanced up the lawn, and the attack was begun with the greatest fury. The sight of their brethren who lay dead on the field, instead

of disheartening them, served but to enrage them. The gates were soon attacked ; and the pioneers, determined to bring them down, laid burning torches under them, which soon communicating to the dry timber, the flame ascended with a crackling noise, and volumes of smoke enveloped the troops on the turrets above the gates, who were unable to see where to direct their darts.

Edmund now dispatched a party round the castle-walls to the western postern, to prevent Orlando from again surprising him.

The flames, fed by the pioneers, who were now endeavouring to force the gates, soon enveloped them ; and now the men, unable to advance through the burning portals, slowly retired, and, protected by the bucklers, beheld them consuming.

Sir Orlando's people fearing the destruction of the barbacan, tore away the gates, and lowering the portcullis, poured through the gratings showers of darts and arrows on the besiegers.

Edmund now ordered a fresh body of men to storm the place; who advancing over the smoking ruins of the gates to the portcullis, defending their bodies from the arrows with their bucklers, drove their long spears through the gratings, and forced the enemy to draw back. Then collecting the burning fragments of the gates, they piled them against the portcullis, and soon had the satisfaction to set it on fire. Their bucklers were loaded with the arrows which had entered them, and many were desperately wounded in this dangerous service.

A breach was now made in the wall

of one of the towers ; but Edmund foresaw the danger to the men in entering unknown chambers. The soldiers therefore contented themselves with throwing in large pieces of burning wood, and retired from the place.

While the army were thus proceeding against the barbacan, another party had fixed their ladders against the wall, and had begun to scale them.

The battle now became dreadful. A horrible carnage ensued. Sir Orlando de Vortimer, standing on the battlements, was seen encouraging his men to the combat. The north tower now began to be enveloped in flames ; pillars of smoke rose from it, and the men who were on the embattled turrets, hastily quitted them. The portcullis was also on fire ; and the assailants retired for the present, to await till the destructive element

should have made them a free passage into the castle.

The tower was now nearly consumed, and in a few minutes the walls fell down with a hideous crash. A dreadful pause ensued. Both armies looked on the flaming pile with horror. The ruins had completely stopped up the passage to the interior of the castle ; and the portcullis still burning fiercely, the fire communicated to the chambers above, and in a short time the barbacan was in flames.

Edmund now bethought himself of Sir William Gaveston, who, Constantine had informed him, was confined in one of the chambers in the barbacan. Calling his men to him, and bidding them follow him, he climbed over the smoking ruins, and effected a stand on the ramparts. They soon drove the enemy from that part.

Constantine, fighting by the side of Edmund, caught his eye. "Follow me," said he, "this instant to where Sir William Gaveston is confined."

The attempt was dangerous. The barbacan was already in flames. Hastily they ran up the stairs; and running along a gallery, one end of which was already on fire, threw open two doors; and Sir William Gaveston and the king's seneschal instantly started from their dungeons, and followed Edmund to the battlements.

There was now no time for words. The enemy were assembling in great force on the ramparts, and the soldiers were looking about for their leader, who had disappeared so suddenly; but now they beheld him approaching with two knights, who each snatching up a sword, flew on the enemy.

Sir Bertrand, who had scaled the wall, advanced towards that part of the rampart where Edmund was so hotly engaged ; and thus the enemy, attacked by two parties, were hemmed in, and cut to pieces.

Victory now began to spread her ensanguined wings over Edmund's troops. They had possession of the ramparts from the north side of the barbacan. The troops, however, on the other side were not yet subdued ; and Edmund now marched round the ramparts to meet them, having with him the brave Bertrand, who embraced his friend Sir William Gaveston with heartfelt delight, as also Sir Hume de Berry, the king's geneschal.

On sight of this formidable troop, the remainder of the castle forces threw down their arms, and submitted to the victor's clemency ; who now ordered

the pennon of Sir Orlando to be torn down, while he took possession of the castle in the name of Anna de Vortimer, and her banners were instantly hoisted on the walls.

Edmund now enquired for Sir Orlando de Vortimer ; but no one could give any account of him. His soldiers said they had seen him near the turret when it fell, but after that they had not beheld him. Supposing, therefore, that he was slain, Edmund made no further enquiries ; but instantly ordered all the troops to endeavour to extinguish the flames, lest they should reach the castle itself. This was accordingly done ; but not, however, till nearly half the barbacan was destroyed.

Edmund gave orders for the release of the men he had sent with flags of truce to bury the dead, and whom Sir

Orlando had so basely made prisoners the night before; and also the pages of Sir William Gaveston and Sir Hume de Berry. He now made fresh enquiries about Sir Orlando de Vortimer. Search had been made after his body, but no where could it be found; and it was generally supposed that he had fled when he perceived that the castle must yield to the conquering arms of Edmund; and which supposition was further confirmed by the western postern being open, which leading into the woods, his flight would be soon concealed by their umbrageous recesses.

Sir William Gaveston now returned his grateful thanks to Edmund, for his preserving him at the hazard of his own life; as did also Sir Hume de Berry.

It being impossible for Sir William to leave the castle at this moment, on ac-

count of the trust imposed on him by the king, he dispatched his friend De Bertrand to the Lady Emilia, and Mortimer went to convey the pleasing news to the Lady Agnes.

When he related the death of Sir Hugh de Burleigh by the hands of Edmund, Rosalia de Gondoni, who was present, was delighted to hear that her persecutor was no more, and that she might now without fear, leave the convent, and return to her humble cottage; but the Lady Agnes requested her to stay, as she would, as soon as possible, cause a search to be made in the castle of Manstow for the narrative.

The Lady Agnes enquired what was become of Sir Orlando; but when she found that he was missing, and that no trace of him could be discovered, she could not dismiss her fears, although

her still more bitter enemy the monk Hildargo was gone.

Edmund now sent a messenger to the Lady Anna de Vortimer with the pennon of Sir Orlando, which he begged permission to lay at her feet.

He now by request of Sir William Gaveston, set the soldiers at work to clear away the ruins ; and employed artificers to rebuild the tower which had fallen down.

To the king he dispatched Sir Hume de Berry with a relation of the occurrences that had taken place at Manstow ; and deeply regretted that he was not able to perform his high order respecting the seizure of Sir Orlando de Vortimer's person, as he was no where to be found.

The mercenary soldiers which be-

longed to Sir Hugh de Burleigh were permitted to retire to their homes ; and those who were taken from the estate, joyfully returned to their allegiance to the Lady Anna, whom they owned to be the rightful inheritress of the domain.

Sir William Gaveston was now busily employed in arranging the affairs of his lovely ward, which it appeared Sir Orlando had left rather in a disturbed state.

The revenues of the domain he had applied to the purpose of paying the troops, and of procuring the provisions for them. He had also expended large sums in the entertainments he had given from time to time to the neighbouring nobility. Thus conducting himself uniformly in a base and unjust manner to-

wards every individual whose misfortune it was to be in his power; and endeavouring not only to make away with the property of the Lady Anna, but also to ruin for ever her happiness in this world.

CHAP. XLIX.

WHILE the Lady Gertrude de Percy and the Lady Anna de Vortimer were anxiously surveying the horseman from the turret-chamber of Percy castle, he rapidly approached its walls ; and they now observed, that what he held in his hand was a pennon ; on a nearer view beheld the well known device of Sir Orlando.

This was of itself a sufficient proof that the sable knight had been successful. And when the messenger whom he sent, entered the hall, the Lady

Gertrude and Anna entered it, and received from him the following packet from Edmund.

" The cloud that hung over the sable knight is at length dispersed in the dungeons of Manstow castle. He has found a mother, whom he tenderly loved, and whose supposed loss embittered his existence. He has restored, by force of arms, the castle of Manstow to the rightful possessor ; and the bearer of this will lay at her feet the pennon of Sir Orlando, which once proudly waved over its battlements. He is commanded by Sir William Gaveston, to attend in three days at the castle De Percy, to have the honour of receiving the Lady Anna's commands and wishes respecting her removal, should she be so pleased.

" EDMUND DE ST. CLAIR."

“ Then he is the son of the Lady Agnes de Vortimer by a former husband,” said the Lady Gertrude de Percy.
“ I now well recollect the circumstance of his marriage with a Lady St. Clair in Bretagne, some years back; and it was reported she was dead.”

It was fortunate for Anna that the Lady Gertrude did not at this moment raise her eyes, or she would have seen the beauteous cheeks of her niece assume a crimson hue. She indeed found it hard to drive from her mind the assemblage of manly graces which had beamed in the countenance of the sable knight, when by accident she saw him with his helmet off; under the idea of his being perhaps of low origin, as he kept his name a secret, she had endeavoured to wean him from her mind; but now that he had rendered her so great services, and appeared so greatly interested for

her, and had declared his name, certain emotions, which before she had endeavoured to subdue, now rose with renewed strength in her heart, and caused a deep blush to overspread her cheeks. The idea of his coming to the castle de Percy, gave her great pleasure.

The Lady Gertrude now demanded what was become of Sir Orlando ; and when she was informed that he was missing, she felt rather alarmed lest that viper should have concealed himself in the grass to sting his enemies with redoubled force. She however considered that it would be impossible for him ever to appear in the world again, and that it was more than probable that he had left the kingdom.

As soon as the messenger was dismissed, Anna retired to her chamber, and there reflected on the intelligence

the knight had given concerning himself, “ Perhaps, thought she, while a deep sigh escaped her, “ his heart is already engaged.” Reflecting, however, on the impropriety of her indulging such thoughts, she descended from her chamber, and seeking the Lady Gertrude, endeavoured to drive away by conversation, the image of Edmund, which rose constantly to her view.

Here however, she was disappointed. The Lady Gertrude was so much charmed with the conduct of Edmund, that she could talk of nothing else than the deeds of valour he had performed, and of which she had been made acquainted by the messenger. She dwelt long on his combat with Sir Orlando, then on his engagement with Sir Hugh de Burleigh, so that Anna, who came to the Lady Gertrude on purpose to forget Edmund, was obliged to listen to

his praises, and to acquiesce in them with the Lady Gertrude, which she felt a pleasure in doing, but was truly concerned that she did so.

As soon therefore as she could, she gave a turn to the dangerous conversation of her aunt ; but the more she saw how necessary it was to drive him from her thoughts, the oftener the recollection of him disturbed her, and instead of being banished, he at last was hardly considered as an intruder ; and she placed all the sensations of pleasure which the idea of again seeing him produced, to the score of gratitude for his great services performed in her behalf.

Edmund, now that his mother was restored to him, and all the anxieties which had so long possessed his breast, were forgot. His thoughts turned un-

ceasingly, on the charms of the Lady Anna de Vortimer, and he directed preparations to be made for his visit to that lady ; in compliance with the request of Sir William Gaveston, and in conformity with the wishes of his heart.

He now visited his beloved mother, who blessed Heaven for having preserved him from the treacherous designs of his enemies. He acquainted the Lady Agnes, that after he had paid his visit to the Lady Anna, that he meant to proceed to Bretagne, to take possession of the estates, which, but for the fidelity of Mortimer, he would have lost.

The kindness of Osberne, and the provident care of De Veseri, had left him well supplied with pecuniary resources, and he determined to make preparations suitable to his rank, which now wanted but a short time ere he

should attain it. He set forward from Manstow, with letters from Sir William Gaveston to the Ladies Gertrude and Anna.

Mortimer, whom Edmund raised from his situation, and had conferred on him a comfortable independency, was sent forward to give notice of his being on the road. Two pages sumptuously habited, preceded him. Edmund was mounted on a milk white courser, habited in a white surcoat, embroidered with gold; his armour richly gilt, and a plume of white feathers waved over his helmet, that was richly studded with valuable gems: behind him, came his shield and lance-bearers; then a page, bearing his pennon with the family device; after him, rode the attendants: and in the rear, in covered cars, were some of the female domestics of the Lady Anna, whom he had brought

with him, in case she should return to her own castle.

He advanced to the castle de Percy, and when he saw its ponderous turrets rising above the surrounding hills, his heart beat violently against his side. The page now blew the horn, which hung by the side of the gates, and having announced his master, the portals opened wide to receive him, and he rode into the court. There he alighted, and was conducted into the hall, where sat the Lady Gertrude, with Anna by her side, to receive him.

They both rose at his approach, and welcomed him to the castle. Edmund struck with the lovely Lady Anna's blushing beauties, had scarcely power to address them ; at length, however, he delivered them the packet from Sir Wil-

liam ; one to the Lady Gertrude, and the other to the Lady Anna.

“ Sir Knight,” said the Lady Gertrude, “ the services you have performed, are such as merit our warmest thanks. The Lady Anna joins with me in our poor endeavours, to express what we feel.”

“ Fair ladies,” said Edmund, “ you do greatly overrate my actions. Who is there, but would have done the same? The act most sweetly repays itself; but your commendation is a happiness, I feel myself not deserving of.” Saying this, he sighed, and appeared to be lost in thought for a moment; while the Lady Gertrude said, “ In the letter I have received from Sir William Gaveston, he expatiates largely on the necessity there is for the appearance of the Lady Anna, after the late disturbances

at Manstow. What do you say, my dear Anna?"

"In that, I shall be directed by you, my dear aunt," said the Lady Anna de Vortimer; "Sir William has also mentioned it to me."

"Then it is my opinion," replied the Lady de Percy, "that you should conform to the wishes of your guardian; and I trust, Sir Edmund will add to the great obligations we are under to him, and be your escort to the castle."

"It is a happiness I greatly covet," replied Edmund, with much earnestness, "and I shall await your pleasure." Saying this, his eyes glanced on the Lady Anna, and then he blushed, as if he feared he had said too much.

The Lady Gertrude now arose, and

having acquainted Sir Edmund that she should expect him at the banquet, quitted the hall. The Lady Anna followed her aunt, and Edmund as he saw her lovely form retiring from the hall, and heard the portal close on her, sighed deeply, and remained for a while fixed to the spot, musing on her charms.

Now with his arms folded, he slowly paced about the hall, and at length, in order to divert his attention, he walked on the castle walls. Chance directed him to the eastern rampart, and he admired the bold scene that presented itself to his view, the boundless ocean and the craggy rocks, against which its restless waves incessantly dashed. The tranquil scene on one side, brought to his recollection the lovely Anna; he viewed for a while the green meadows, the swelling hills, and the resplendent sun as it brightened the face of nature.

"O God," he exclaimed, "how could I wander delighted over those verdant plains, were I but blessed with the society of Anna; but, alas! why do I indulge such ideas, such fond hopes which may never be realized :" a deep sigh ended this involuntary exclamation, and he slowly continued his walk.

The Lady Anna de Vortimer heard the arrival of Edmund announced, she had expected him for some time, and from the casement of her oratory, had beheld him approaching to the castle. She admired the elegance with which he sat his steed, his graceful mien and commanding deportment.

She had that day taken more than usual pains with her person, her beautiful hair was most elegantly disposed, light curls waved over her polished forehead, and strings of pearls

were twined round the braids of her lovely ringlets ; a white robe which was confined to her waist by a rich girdle of diamonds, shewed the elegance of her shape.

Thus attired, she descended to the hall, and beheld him enter it, while a fluttering at her heart told her that it was more than gratitude which she felt for her defender.

When she followed the Lady Gertrude out of the hall, as the domestic closed the door after her, she turned round and saw Edmund looking on her ; a blush dyed her cheeks, and she proceeded to her own apartment, where his elegant form rose to her ideal view.

She opened her casement, and sitting down by it, reflected on the conversation that had occurred in the hall,

when one of her servants entered the chamber. "How, Jannetta," said she, "did you come here?" "Oh, my lady, did you not know that Sir Edmund, the brave knight that took the castle, provided cars to bring us to attend on you?"

"Did he, indeed," said the Lady Anna, much surprised.

"Yes, lady," replied the domestic, "we followed in his train."

Anna could not avoid being greatly pleased with his attention to her.

Jannetta, who had been born in the castle of Manstow, and had attended on the Lady Anna constantly, would oft-times take on herself the liberty of speaking to her lady if she thought she had any news which would entertain her.

"Oh, my lady," said she, "if you had but seen Sir Edmund when he was mounting on the burning ruins of the great tower, you would never have forgot it; and when he rushed through what the soldiers called the barbacan, which was all in flames, to save Sir William Gaveston, at the risk of his own life."

"Generous Edmund!" thought Anna, "how frequently has he exposed himself to dangers on my account; surely I ought to be gratitude itself for such noble acts.—But what became of the ancient Editha?" said the Lady Anna to Jannetta.

"Why, lady, she was confined by order of Sir Orlando, in one of the lower chambers in the southern tower, and the night before the combat which took place between Sir Orlando and Sir

Edmund—Oh! lady, if you had but seen them fight; such sparks of fire as came from their armour; and then after Sir Orlando ran away—and indeed it was quite time he did, for he was all over blood: I saw his armour, lady, which was cut and hacked to pieces by Sir Edmund's great sword.”

“ Well, but Jannetta, you wander from my question,” said Anna.

“ Oh, true, lady, you was asking about Editha.—Well, as I was saying, in the night before the combat, Sir Edmund contrived to get into the castle unperceived by any one, and he released Editha, and brought her safely away; and then in two days after, he sent her to the convent where the lady, his mother was, who had been confined in the dungeons so long.”

If any thing was wanting to impress her mind with a more favourable opinion than she already had of Edmund, this circumstance, in generously preserving her domestic, whose fate she had deplored when she related her situation to her, would have completely turned the balance in his favour. So many indescribable sensations at this moment arose in her breast, that she dismissed her attendant from the chamber, and for a while thought only of Edmund.

While indulging the ideas that arose in her breast, she was leaning pensively on the frame of the casement. Some paces below, made her arise from her seat to see who it was, when she suddenly withdrew, on beholding the object of her thoughts walking on the rampart beneath her casement; his arms were folded, and he seemed to be surveying

the surrounding country ; when some words which he uttered, made her attentive to what he was saying ; and she plainly heard him pronounce her name, and then sighing, continued his walk.

Anna being alone, was spared the pain of having a witness to the crimson glow that pervaded her cheeks, at what she had heard. She retired from the window, and fearful lest he should see her, she approached it no more ; - but remained in her oratory till she was summoned to attend the banquet, which was served up in the hall.

The numerous domestics and retainers of the Lady Gertrude, many of whom had grown grey in her service, lined the upper end of the hall ; and a most magnificent repast was served up on the marble table, which was supported by

carved representations of griffin's claws, which were richly gilt.

Anna, during the repast scarce dared to lift up her eyes, lest she should encounter the glance of Sir Edmund; and was happy when it was over, and she had left the hall with the Lady Gertrude.

The next morning was fixed on for her departure for Manstow castle, and she ordered her domestics to make preparations for the journey. The thought that she was to be conducted there by Edmund, gave her great pleasure.

Edmund, at the repast, noticed the very reserved conduct of the Lady Anna, which caused many a sigh to escape his breast; for he feared that either some other happy knight possessed her affections, or that he was viewed with indifference.

These thoughts oppressed his mind with melancholy, and he arose in the morning from his couch, weary and unhappy.

As soon as every thing was prepared, Anna took an affectionate leave of the Lady Gertrude; and mounting her favourite palfrey, attended by Edmund, left the hospitable roof of Percy castle. The many attendants of the Lady Anna and Sir Edmund, made the journey slow. Edmund riding by the side of Anna, endeavoured to amuse her by conversation, and pointing out the beauties of the varied scenery through which they passed; and while she was engaged in admiring them, would steal a glance at her lovely charms, while a deep sigh proclaimed how hopeless he thought his passion was.

Anna did not let those expressions of

his grief pass unnoticed, every one reverberated to her heart ; and she feared that there was still some cause unknown to her, which disturbed his rest. "Perhaps," thought she, "the name I heard him utter, may belong to some fair, who returns not his attentions."

Such were the thoughts that occupied the breasts of the Lady Anna and Edmund, as they proceeded on their journey.

At length, on the third evening, the lofty turrets of Manstow appeared to their view, rising high above the surrounding foliage.

When Anna advanced up the lawn she saw the ravages of war, the dismantled turrets which yet remained of the barbacan, the pile of ruins made by the destruction of one of the towers ; and

she figured to herself the undaunted Edmund rushing through the flaming pile to rescue her guardian Sir William. The ruins had been cleared away before the gateway to afford a passage, Anna shuddered as she passed under it, and saw part of the burnt portals yet hanging on the massy hinges, and the remains of the immense portcullis.

In the hall she was welcomed to her castle by her new guardian Sir William Gaveston, who, in a courteous manner observed how highly the king his master, honored him by the lovely charge he had placed under his care ; and expressed the obligation he was under to Edmund who had saved him from the devouring flames.

The next morning the Lady Anna having consulted Sir William, unknown to Edmund, proceeded to the convent,

where she waited on the Lady Agnes, and entreated her to make the castle of Manstow her home, till she could conveniently return to the chateau de St. Clair.

Anna was so earnest in her request that the Lady Agnes at length complied.

Editha was overwhelmed with joy at seeing her beloved mistress again, and Anna now returned to the castle, accompanied by the Lady Agnes and her old domestic.

Edmund was on the point of setting out to the convent to visit his mother, when he was most agreeably surprised at seeing her enter the castle. This instance of the kind attentions of Anna, served, if possible, to rivet his affections still more on her, and now that his mind

was released from the misery that it had so long laboured under concerning his mother, he found that his breast was possessed by an inmate that deprived him of his repose, and made him pass his days in solitary rambles in the forest, and his nights in melancholy ruminations.

He was unwilling to go to the chateau de St. Clair, as he had intended, for he felt that he should be unable to exist, when separated from the lovely Anna.

Rosalia de Gondoni, as soon as she had heard of the death of Sir Hugh de Burleigh, had left the convent, and again returned to her cottage; and the Lady Agnes now bethought herself of her promise to her, of endeavouring to find the narrative of Pierro; and search being made in the dungeon where she had passed so many hapless hours, it

was found on the floor ; and the Lady Agnes selecting those sheets which contained the relation of the cruel acts of Molini against the father of Rosalia, she sent them to her that she might make a proper representation of the circumstances to the Neapolitan court, and that justice might at last reach Molini.

The castle of Manstow was soon restored to its former appearance, the tower was rebuilt, and the barbacan repaired ; the gates were hung on their massy hinges, and the portcullis was suspended by the enormous chains.

Edmund had amused himself by directing the proceedings of the artificers in strengthening the defences of the place, and when they were completed he still remained at Manstow.

Sir William Gaveston earnestly soli-

cited his further stay, and Edmund, unable to tear himself away from the enchanting society of the Lady Anna, deferred his intended journey to Bretagne, from day to day.

To leave Manstow, was to Edmund, to leave all the bliss and happiness which the world afforded. It was a deprivation of the only thing that made life desirable, while it daily encreased his misery. Strange contradiction! yet the truth will be allowed by those who have felt the pains of loving, without the ecstatic bliss of a return.

CHAP. L.

EDMUND at length departed with a heavy heart from Manstow, to wait on the king, and to request that the title of his father, the late Baron de St. Clair, might be continued in him.

The king, who had heard from the seneschal of his gallant conduct at the attack of the castle of Manstow, and of his bravery in rescuing Sir William and De Berry from the dungeons while the barbacan was in flames,—received him with much pleasure in his countenance ; and instantly granted his suit, confirm-

ing to him likewise all the lands belonging to the barony, which, on the death of the Baron Henri de St. Clair and the supposed murder of the young Edmund, had been vested in the crown. He created him likewise a knight of the order of the Golden Shield; himself hanging a superb chain, to which was attached the insignia of the order about the neck of Edmund, who bent his knee to the sovereign on receiving this great mark of distinction.

Edmund, thus highly honoured, left the court, and prepared for his journey to Bretagne, with a heart overwhelmed with sorrow at the distance between him and Manstow castle, where dwelt the peerless Anna. Oftentimes he determined to turn back, and throwing himself on his knees before her, unfold the sentiments of his heart, and hear his doom; but the idea of a refusal dwelt

with such dreadful sensations on his mind, that he still remained undetermined what to do. " Better," said he, " that I enjoy the sweets of hope, and pass away my life in the gloom of melancholy, than by knowing my doom, precipitate myself into the black gulph of utter despair ; and, perhaps, in my misery, terminate my hapless existence ! Oh, Anna, I wish to know my fate, and yet fear to ask a question in which dwells the happiness of my life ! "

The unhappy Edmund was continually tortured by his fears ; and scarcely sensible of what he was doing, he embarked on board a vessel, and soon landed on the coast of Bretagne. Mortimer accompanied him, and also Constantine, to whom Edmund was much attached, since he found that it was through his means that the Lady Anna had effected her escape from the power of Sir Orlando.

When Edmund arrived at the forest of Guirche, he sent Mortimer with two pages to make preparations for his arrival at his barony; and turning into the wood, was soon in the arms of Hugo de Montmorency. The other knights crowded round him, and testified their joy at his appearance.

He briefly related the occurrences that had taken place since he last saw them. The remainder of that day he passed with the Knights of the Forest; and when they parted to repair to their cabins, Edmund hasted to the chapel. He raised the latch, and entering, the moon, whose silver beams illumined the silent face of nature, streaming through the painted panes of the casements, afforded him sufficient light to direct his steps to Osberne's tomb.

His heart was softened by the acts of

attention and goodness that rushed to his memory of the friendly instructor of his youth ; and the knowledge that the miseries inflicted by hopeless love brought him to the grave, increased his grief.

“ And I too,” said he, “ dear friend of my youth, I am following your hapless steps. I fear to know my doom, lest the knowledge of it should annihilate me ! Wouldst that thou from thy tomb couldst advise me ! Oh, Osberne, how do I feel for thy sufferings, since I know the bitter anguish myself ! ”

A voice calling him by his name, made him start from the tomb, when he perceived the figure of a man approaching him, and by the assistance of the light of the moon, he soon recognized father Oswald, the venerable confessor to the knights.

“ My son,” said the monk, “ some

sentences I have overheard of thy speech, betokens a disordered mind. Tell me, I pray you, the cause ; it may perhaps be in my power to offer, if not advice, the consolations of sympathizing with you in the grief that seems to trouble you so much."

"Oh, father!" said Edmund, "I lament for what, as yet, there is no other foundation than my fears. I love, father ! love to distraction, a peerless maid, but have not courage to declare my passion, lest it meet with a refusal.

"Hath the lady," said Oswald, "any suitors, that your mind is perplexed with such fears ?" "None, father, that I know, or have heard of."

"Then why," said Oswald, "do you afflict yourself in so needless a manner ? you are guilty of a sin, my son, to

consume your youth in regrets for what may prove your happiness: you will cause the rose on your cheek to fade, and languor will pervade your youthful limbs; and how couldst thou with a hollow eye, shrunken form, and a premature old age, brought on by grief, pretend to youth and beauty. Would it not reject the man who had not courage to declare a just and honourable passion, but let concealment prey on his vitals?"

"Enough, father," said Edmund, "I own the justness of your reasoning. I will take on me the courage to declare the passion that is so deeply engrafted in my heart."

Oswald now turned the discourse, and leaving the chapel with Edmund, they walked through the forest; the father endeavouring by his instructive

voice, to allay the inquietude that pervaded Edmund's breast.

The scene was solemn; not a breath of wind disturbed the silence; the clear sky bespangled with myriads of bright stars, with the pale regent of night, illuminated the horizon. Seated on a fallen tree, Oswald and Edmund passed the tranquil hours in pleasing converse, and when the morning beams robbed the moon of its silver radiance, Edmund pressed the hand of Oswald, and repaired to his cabin, determined when again he arrived at Manstow, to take his advice, and know at once his fate.

At length he awoke Constantine, and bidding him prepare the horses, soon regained the direct road to the chateau de St. Clair.

When he came near the village, the

peasants delighted at the arrival of their lord, whom they thought had been murdered by the banditti, met him, and by their loud and joyful acclamations, testified their happiness at his return.

Edmund repaired to the chateau, where he had the papers of the personal estates of the Baron Henri, which he bequeathed to his son, taken from their secure repository ; and having examined them, and finding every thing correct, he began to turn his thoughts towards Manstow ; when a messenger arrived from Sir William Gaveston, to inform him, that he intended to hold a tournament at the castle, in honour of the restoration of the Lady Anna de Vortimer to her possessions, and requested that Edmund would grace the ceremony with his presence.

Edmund pleased with the opportu-

nity thus unexpectedly given him of signalizing himself before the Lady Anna, instantly departed from the chateau, and journeyed on with all speed to the sea coast.

Prosperous gales soon brought to his view the chalky cliffs of Albion ; and Edmund beheld with delight the land where Anna resided.

In a short time he beheld the lofty turrets of Manstow, and soon perceived Sir William Gaveston, who welcomed him with great friendship. Entering the hall he saw two females walking at the further end, and soon recognized them to be the Ladies Agnes and Anna. He sprung forwards to meet them, and beheld the cheeks of Anna suffused with a crimson glow. Her speech faltered as she addressed him ; and Edmund, who in her beheld the source of his future

misery or happiness, could scarcely articulate his thanks for her enquiries.

The Lady Anna beheld the departure of Edmund from the castle of Manstow with sensations which she was obliged in public to confine to her breast, and which, in the retirement of her chamber, tortured her with double violence; she counted the tardy hours that intervened between the time he left the castle, and his return; and when she understood that Sir William meant to give a tournament, and had sent a messenger to Edmund, to acquaint him of the same, and to request his presence, it conveyed a soothing serenity to her breast; and when at length she beheld Edmund, her agitations were almost too much for her to bear.

Edmund determin'd to defer the avowal of his passion for the Lady Anna

till after the tournament, when he hoped to prove himself worthy of her love, and he waited anxiously for the day.

Sir William Gaveston, who at his private expence had given the tournament, was determined that it should be as magnificent a one as ever was held within the walls of Manstow.

In addition to the neighbouring nobility, who were all invited to attend, he had also sent messengers to his own friends. And two days before the tournament, the Lady Emilia and the Baron de Hertford arrived at the castle.

Edmund, in the pleasing hopes which now began to diffuse themselves with an animating glow over his frame, beheld the preparations making; the galleries were decorated with various ornaments, and the fronts were hung with

crimson velvet; at one end a throne was erected for the Lady Anna de Vor-timer, who was to bestow the rewards on the victors.

A vast concourse of knights crowded the halls of Manstow, and the grand hall exhibited a display of feudal magnificence, which was scarcely exceeded by the banquets given by the sovereign himself. An immense table stretched entirely across the hall, an awning of blue satin was suspended by silk cords, over it, at the upper end, was a raised seat for Sir William, and on each side of him were rich sofas for the Lady Anna, the Lady Agnes, and the Lady Emillia; at the lower end was likewise a seat placed for the victor at the tournament.

The immense pillars which supported the roof were thickly hung with the spoils taken in battle by the former pos-

sessors of the castle ; which consisted of banners, bucklers, casques, corselets, and other parts of armour, whose battered appearance proclaimed the hard fought battle.

Two days before the tournament, the shields of the knights, who were to engage, were hung up in the hall ; and when the morning approached, Edmund with a beating heart, heard the loud blasts of the trumpets, and the neighing of the steeds, as the squires were caparisoning them with their gaudy trappings for the tournament.

His pages now armed him with a steel breast-plate, which was richly strewed over with golden stars, his cuishes were of fine polished steel, his casque was richly gilt, and surmounted by a crest of white plumes, and his surcoat was of a dark crimson, adorned in the

same manner as his armour, with golden stars.

Thus accoutred, he left his chamber, and descended into the hall, where the knights assembled; taking down their shields, they now proceeded across the court-yard to the castle gates, where their steeds were awaiting them.

Edmund, who lingered behind the party, saw the Lady Anna advancing with his mother and the Lady Emilia into the hall, through the portal that led to the side of the castle she inhabited. Respectfully he approached them; and having watched an opportunity while the Lady Agnes was conversing with the Lady Emilia, he in a faltering voice entreated of the Lady Anna, that she would grant him some favour.

Anna blushed deeply, and taking a bracelet off her snowy arm, presented

it to him. Delighted with the invaluable ornament, which he instantly attached to the golden chain which he wore about his neck, he bowed his thanks and departed.

The Lady Anna beheld his graceful form as he crossed the hall; and much pleased with the request he had made of a token from her, she took her seat, attended by Sir William Gaveston, on the superb throne he had ordered to be prepared for her.

The trumpets now gave the signal for the knights to advance, who passed the barriers on their fiery coursers. Edmund took his station in the list, and anxiously waited till the examination of the judges was over. He then dispatched his herald with a challenge to the knight, who was next to him; and spurring

on his steed, they commenced the mock combat.

The lady Anna grew pale on seeing Edmund engaged, and turned away from the sight, till the shout of applause from the galleries made her look round, when she beheld the knight on the ground, and Edmund unlacing his helmet to give him air; this sight revived her spirits, and she felt more composed.

Edmund having thus vanquished his first opponent, mounted his steed, and awaited for the next knight who should wish to engage him.

A knight of gigantic stature mounted on a black horse, now rode forwards, and couching his lance, drove furiously at Edmund, who was obliged to use all his dexterity to avoid the sudden attack. The lance, however struck against his breast-plate, and had not Edmund

started aside, he would have been unhorsed.

Anna had near called out to prevent the combat, but recollecting how conspicuous she would make herself by such a proceeding, with much agitation, she forbore.

Edmund's anger was roused by the behaviour of his adversary, who appeared determined on unhorsing him, and having wheeled about, they ran the career, and Edmund was again nearly unhorsed by the superior strength of his adversary, his lance glancing against his knee. Edmund, however, kept his seat; and now he determined, that the next career should decide the combat. Setting his lance firm in the rest, he rushed on his fierce adversary, whose lance he this time avoided, and his entering between the top of the breast-plate, and the part

of the helmet that came round the neck, the gigantic knight was hurled from his saddle, and fell to the earth with a thundering noise.

Edmund, anxious to know who his adversary was, alighted from his steed, and was going to unbuckle the helmet, for he saw with great regret, that his lance had tore the flesh, and the blood was trickling down the armour of the fallen knight, when he suddenly drew his sword, and raising himself from the ground, thrust it with such force at Edmund, (who at that moment was unconscious of his danger,) that it entered the folds of the armour, and had Edmund been nearer to him, the consequences had been fatal.

Anna who saw the act, and beheld the sword returned dyed with the blood of Edmund, uttered a dreadful shriek,

and fell senseless on the steps of the throne.

The Ladies Agnes and Emillia hastily raised her up, and Edmund, who had been but little hurt, ran up to the throne, and greatly agitated, ordered his pages to procure some water. Whether it was the effect of the cool drops which were sprinkled on her face, or the voice of Edmund, which recalled her to life is uncertain. But Anna now opened her lovely eyes, and the pale lily that had enveloped her downy cheeks gave way to the deep tint of the rose.

Edmund, when he saw that she was recovered, left her, and went to the knight, who had fallen back on the ground, seemingly through loss of blood, which dyed the place where he lay.

He ordered him to be carried into the

castle, and his armour taken off, and at the same time bid Constantine, who attended him, as lance-bearer, to see that the wounded knight was watched, that he did not escape, for he was determined to know who he was that had evidently a design on his life.

The blood had ceased to flow from his wound, which was but a slight rasure of the skin, and disdaining to appear to notice it; he vaulted on his steed, and waited to see if any one else would attack him, none, however, came forth, and Edmund remained the conqueror of the field. He now alighted from his steed and ascending one step of the throne, knelt to receive the prize from the Lady Anna, which was a white silk scarf, embroidered with gold.

Anna, though scarcely able to stand from the agitation she had undergone,

tremblingly arose, and threw over him the prize, made invaluable by the donor. Lady Agnes now requested him to retire to have his wound examined, and Sir William Gaveston having put an end to the tournament, he retired to his chamber, where his attendants unarmed him.

His wound was so trifling, as scarcely to need any application, for when the knight thrust his sword at him, he was at too great a distance from him for it to pierce deep ; he now arrayed himself in an elegant dress, and was going to leave his chamber, when Constantine entered.

“ The supposed knight, my lord, is dead,” said he. “ Dead!” said Edmund, “ Yes,” my lord, “ the lance tore his throat in a most dreadful manner, and he died without speaking a word.”

" But you said, supposed knight.
Know you who he was Constantine ?"

" No other, my lord, than Ugo, one
of Sir Orlando's people."

" Is it possible !" said Edmund,
" Good Heavens ! can such villainy
exist ! Constantine, go and acquaint Sir
William Gaveston with the circum-
stance, and tell him I will await his lea-
sure in the hall."

Constantine now departed, and Edmund wearing the embroidered scarf, proceeded to the chamber which Ugo had been carried. He was lying stretched on a table, and presented a horrible spectacle, the lance had tore away the windpipe, and his head appeared almost severed from his body, and hung back, disclosing his shocking wound.

Edmund left the chamber, and proceeding to the hall, found Sir William Gaveston there. "Your enemy," said he, "is still pursuing you, by what I have heard. What a pity it is that the man was so mortally wounded, else we might have learnt where his base employer is, and have sent a party to seize him."

"Would to Heavens," said Edmund, "I could meet him in some enclosed place, where he could not escape my just vengeance! The time, however, may yet come. Meantime we must be cautious of the further acts of the vile assassin. I hope, Sir William, that this circumstance will be kept secret from the Lady Agnes, as it would shock her so much."

"That is the very thing I wished,"

replied Sir William ; “ and will instantly issue directions to the domestics who are acquainted with it.”

Constantine had, however, disclosed his knowledge of the supposed knight only to his master ; and by his orders to Sir William, so that the Lady Agnes was spared the misery the knowledge of this circumstance would have caused her.

He now directed that the body should be interred in the chapel vaults as soon as possible, and that his armour should be preserved. Constantine was charged with seeing this order performed ; and Edmund, who felt unhappy at the event of the tournament, and bearing no resentment against the unfortunate wretch who had fallen beneath his successful arm, went himself to see that his re-

mains were attended to the grave by a friar.

As the servants were stripping the body of the clothes, a paper was found, which they presented to Edmund, who opening it, read the following lines :

“ Ugo,

“ IF no opportunity occurs to execute
 “ your mission in private, attend at the
 “ tournament ; and should your arm be
 “ successful, then raise it against the
 “ new guardian. That done, you shall
 “ have whatever you can desire.

“ VORTIMER.”

Edmund was shocked at the horrible intentions of Sir Orlando, and returned thanks to Providence, that had so greatly interfered in his favour. He now went

to the vaults, and saw laid in the cold bosom of the earth, with the rites of the church performed by a friar from St. Austin's monastery, the misguided victim to the diabolical schemes of the revengeful and blood-thirsty Sir Orland de Vortimer.

CHAP. LI.

THE cheerful trumpets gave notice of the hour of the banquet. Edmund entered the grand hall, and beheld Anna walking with the Lady Agnes down the side aisle. He hasted to meet her; and Anna enquired with some earnestness about this wound.

Edmund, pleased with the interest she took, declared, "that the pleasure she gave him by her kind solicitude, would ease the smart of a thousand wounds."

Anna with a smile replied, "Your gallantry, Sir Edmund, is equal to your

bravery—you seem to be well versed in both. I am myself greatly indebted to your arm."

" Fair lady," said Edmund, his eyes sparkling with delight at her praise: " you little know how great was the pleasure I received, and how grateful I am to fortune, who threw me in your way, that I might be of some trifling service to you."—Edmund sighed; and now Sir William approaching, requested the Lady Agnes to permit him to attend her to the table.

Edmund made the same request to the Lady Anna; and as he touched her hand, felt his soul thrill with the most exquisite emotions of rapture.

Sir William Gaveston requested Edmund to take the seat appointed for the victor of the day; and now the ladies

and the knights being seated around the splendid board, the feast commenced; while the minstrels and troubadours with their lively strains banished far from every heart each melancholy idea; and even Edmund, who had been so much pleased with the conversation he had held with the Lady Anna, felt his heart lighter, and enjoyed the festive hour.

When the banquet was over, Sir William ordered the tables to be removed, and preparations to be made for the sportive dance.

Edmund pressed through the crowd, and in a supplicating voice begged to be honoured with the hand of the Lady Anna.

It was impossible to refuse the favour to one who had so often risked his life for her; and Anna, with a pleasure she

exerted herself to conceal, granted his request.

Edmund's countenance plainly shewed the delight of his heart ; and when the airy strains gave animation to the splendid group, Edmund, each time he touched her hand, and saw her graceful fascinating form treading the mazes of the sportive round, drank deep draughts of love and adoration.

It was not till a late hour that the company separated ; and Edmund, with a heart enfraught with every tender sentiment, and swelling with a thousand fears, retired to his chamber. " Tomorrow," said he, " shall be the eventful day, which will either render me the most blest of men, or the veriest wretch that crawls upon the earth !" Full of his intention, he passed a sleepless night ; and as soon as the gladsome beams of

the morning illuminated the face of nature, he arose, and crossing the lawn, walked on the banks of the lake, whose waters, trembling with the breeze that lightly indented its surface, sparkled with the radiance of the sun.

Edmīnd, musing on his deeply-rooted love, strolled on the verdant banks; his resolution almost wavered with respect to his intentions, and throwing himself down on the flowery carpet with which bounteous Nature adorns the earth, he gave loose to the tender emotions of his heart. Casting his eyes up, he beheld some of the ladies, who yet remained at the castle, walking towards the spot where he was lying; he hastily started up, and darting into the bosom of a small grove, hid himself from their view.

Emerging from it on the opposite

side, he bent his steps towards the castle, where he beheld the Lady Anna walking by herself towards the lake, seemingly with an intention of joining the party, who had disturbed Edmund from his reverie.

He advanced towards her with a palpitating heart, and bowed low. When he approached her, "Sir Edmund," said the Lady Anna, "your early rising bespeaks you fond of the morning breeze. If I mistake not, I saw you some hours ago crossing the lawn."

"'Tis true, lady," said Edmund, with a sigh, "but it is not the refreshing gale I seek: 'tis the solitude of the grove, where, unseen and unheard, I can indulge the melancholy of my soul."

"I greatly lament, Sir Edmund," said Anna, "that your breast should

still be clouded by sorrow. What new cause can there be which so much oppresses you?"

During this conversation, they had continued their walk, and were passing through the grove that reached to the edge of the lake. The company were out of sight; and fortune seemed to smile on Edmund, in thus granting to him a moment, when he could divulge the sentiments of his heart to the lovely Anna.

"Does the Lady Anna ask of me," said he, "the reason of my sighs? Behold me kneeling before the angelic cause. Yes, beauteous Anna, I have long loved you with an ardour, that unless you look with pity on me, will soon close the scene of life. Pardon, I beseech you my presumption: long have I harboured the secret of my adoration

for you, in my bosom ; fearful of unfolding it, lest you should turn with disdain from the tale of love."

During this speech, it would exceed the weak efforts of the pen to describe the agitations of the Lady Anna. To behold at her feet, the man she so much esteemed : to hear him expressing his adoration for her ; and to find at once, all her doubts concerning the cause of his grief, vanish, rushed like a tide of joy to her breast. For some moments she was silent ; while Edinund at her feet gazing on her, and with a pale agitated countenance, was waiting her reply.

"Edmund," at length, she uttered, "you know sufficient of me to be certain that I must ever be grateful to you for the generous acts you have performed : let this answer suffice.—I

tremble lest you should be discovered in your present position."

"Oh, Anna!" said Edmund, "talk not, think not of what I have done. What is there I would not do to render you the least service. Give me some assurance, lovely fair, that you will compassionate my sufferings, or I shall think only of the awful hour which will close my wretched life."

Anna was touched with the agitations of Edmund; she beheld his eyes suffused in tears—his trembling frame—the difficulty with which he articulated his speech. Agitated herself, almost to fainting, and hardly knowing at the moment what she did, she followed the dictates of her heart, and stretching out her lovely hand to him, she said, in a trembling low voice, "Rise, Edmund, live in hope."

Edmund caught her hand, with rapture depicted in his countenance, he pressed it to his lips—he looked at her—he endeavoured to speak, his heart was too full—tears came to his relief; and at length he uttered, “Oh Anna! how you have blessed me.” He now arose from the ground; looked tenderly at Anna; pressed her hand to his lips, and then gently resigned it.

Anna wiped away the pearly tear that stood trembling in her eyes, ready to overflow their lovely brink. She endeavoured to walk, but her trembling limbs refused their office: Edmund supported her.

“Leave me, I beseech you, Edmund,” said Anna: “I am fearful lest you should be seen with me; the world is too apt to draw wrong conclusions.”

“Dearest Anna!” sighed Edmund;

"would I were never more to leave you ; in what a state of halcyon bliss would I pass my life. I obey you, fair angel ; I leave the sun that animates my frame."

So saying, he departed, after turning round, and casting a longing look behind on Anna, who, scarcely able to walk, was slowly proceeding towards the company.

Edmund's heart was now light and joyous, his anxious fears had in a great measure subsided, and he determined to seek Sir William Gaveston, to lay before him the situation of his heart with respect to his lovely ward.

He therefore entered the castle, and hearing that Sir William was in his apartments, he repaired there, and with some agitation, told him of his love for the Lady Anna.

Sir William, who had beheld in Ed-

mund, a youth adorned with every virtuous quality, and to whose generous courage he was indebted for his life, heard him with unfeigned delight.

Taking his hand, “ My consent, Sir Edmund, you have obtained ; and whatever I can do to forward your suit, command me. The Lady Gertrude must be consulted, and should you wish it, I will to-morrow set out for Percy castle.”

“ Sir William,” said Edmund, “ how shall I repay your kindness ?” “ Talk not of repaying, Sir Edmund,” said Sir William, “ you forget that I am indebted to you for my life; but you shall find that your brave acts shall never be absent from my memory.”

Sir William Gaveston, delighted at having an opportunity of rendering a

service to Edmund, instantly gave orders for his journey, which he intended should take place early the next morning.

Edmund repaired to the Lady Agnes, and, for the first time, disclosed to her his love for the Lady Anna, the hopes which she had given him, and the consent he had obtained from Sir William Gaveston.

The Lady Agnes was greatly delighted with the happy prospect that appeared before him.

Of his love for the Lady Anna, she was not ignorant; for she had observed of late, the involuntary sighs which burst from the breast of Edmund; and watching, found that he would seize every opportunity of gazing on the fascinating beauties of the Lady Anna. She was pleased at his choice, and sincerely wished he might be united to her.

At the repast, Anna scarce dared to lift up her eyes lest they should encounter those of Edmund, whose spirits, exhilarated by the events of the day, shewed themselves by the joyous unclouded countenance he wore.

Early the next morning Sir William sent for the Lady Anna, who, wondering at the message, immediately attended him in the hall.

"Lady," said he, "I am now going to Percy castle. Have you any commands to the Lady Gertrude?"

Anna was much surprised at this sudden visit, and asked if there was any important event, that occasioned his sudden journey there. "Yes, lady," said he, "'tis no less than your future establishment in life."

"My establishment! how mean you,

Sir?" said Anna. "Fair lady," said Sir William, "my consent has been asked, and obtained by Sir Edmund, Baron of St. Clair, who sincerely loves you, and seeks to be allied to you. Of his worth, it is needless for me to expatiate. You lady, are indebted to him for his good services in almost as great a degree as myself. But should the errand I am going on, not meet your approbation, I will instantly desist; my aim is to make you happy."

Anna replied not; but overwhelmed in blushing confusion, sat silent on a couch. "Your blushes, lady, I take as my answer," continued Sir William; "and sincerely do I congratulate you on the prospect of happiness that awaits you."

Not wishing to distress her any longer, Sir William took leave of Anna, and

withdrew. And just at the moment he left the hall, Edmund entered it by another portal, and saw Anna rising from her seat; and bent his steps towards her apartments: he flew towards her. "Stop dearest, loveliest Anna, grant me the sweet delight of a moment's converse with you."

Saying this, he took her passive hand, and requested her to be seated; when he threw himself at her feet. "Again, my angelic Anna, must I thank, must I bless you for your goodness to me. In you is centered all my happiness—all my adoration. Say, dearest Anna, do you repent your kindness to me yesterday?"

"No, Edmund," said the blushing Anna, "and, I trust, I never shall."

"No, never, while life animates my

frame, shall you have cause?" said Edmund. "Oh, my Anna! did you but know what agonies, what miseries, I have endured, ere I could summon up courage to speak to you; but now all my sufferings are amply repaid. Tell me, dearest Anna, has Sir William had any conversation with you this morning on the interesting subject that occupies my heart?"

"Yes," said Anna in a faltering voice.

"And did you, lovely Anna, allow him to speak to the Lady Gertrude?" Edmund's whole soul was wound up in the expectancy of the Lady Anna's reply; her crimson cheeks foretold her answer, ere her lips could be brought to utter it. At length she said, in a low voice,

"Yes, Edmund, I did."

Edmund now, assured of his happiness, kissed her hand a thousand times, and hung over it enamoured. My Anna!—my adored Anna! dear soul of my existence—lovely idol of my adoration, was all he could say.

Anna was affected by his transports; she partook of them herself. Their love was mutual. It was that pure affection, that harmonizer of souls, that refined union of hearts that dwelt in their breasts; free from all base dross; the breath of their existence were intermixed; one heart—one mind—one soul; sweet intercourse it is that smooths the rugged path of life, and makes the stony wilderness appear bedecked with a variegated carpet of odoriferous flowers.—No stormy passions arise; no blustering winds disturb the harmonious repose that dwells in the breasts of two, who, loving and beloved, make of this care-fraught world a paradise.

The Lady Agnes de Vortimer, when she arose that morning, went, as was her usual custom, to the apartments of the Lady Anna ; and not finding her there, she concluded that she was walking on the lawn before the castle ; and she descended to the corridore which led into the hall ; in which, when she entered, she beheld the Lady Anna seated on a sofa, with her beloved Edmund on his knees before her. She saw him kissing her hand, and heard Edmund declaring his love ; she was greatly delighted at the sight, and coming up to them with a light step, she suddenly took their hands, which she joined, and prayed heaven to bless them.

Anna uttered a faint exclamation, and Edmund raising his eyes beheld his mother. “ My dear mother,” said he, “ you are come in a happy moment, to

see your son made the happiest of men !
The Lady Anna, I trust, sees in you,
her future mother."

Anna, much confused at being surprised conversing with Edmund, now arose from her seat, and endeavouring to smile on the Lady Agnes, leant on her arm for support, while Edmund, regaining his feet, envied his mother her lovely burthen.

A loud trampling of steeds was now heard in the court-yard ; and Edmund starting forwards, beheld Sir William Gaveston on the point of setting out on his important mission.

He embraced Edmund, and promising to make a quick return, vaulted on his steed, and with his attendants, proceeded through the gates of Manstow,

followed by the prayers of Edmund for his success.

He now turned back to the hall, and rejoined Anna and the Lady Agnes. They left the castle, and turning into the woods that lay in the rear of Manslow, they wound amongst their umbrageous recesses, enjoying that pure and delicate delight in each other's society, which those who have ever loved with real affection are alone sensible of.

Edmund related to them some of his adventures, and dwelt long on Osberne, the friend of his youth. The Lady Agnes, when she heard of his death, and reflected that she was innocently the cause, dropt a tear to his memory ; and, at the solicitation of Edmund, gave him the following information :

" When Osberne forced himself away in the forest, leaving me with the Baron de St. Clair, who, unable to stand, by reason of his weak state, was seated on the bank.

" I felt for and greatly pitied the hapless state of St. Clair, who I was not without some apprehensions that unless assistance could be procured for him, that he would die where he was, for the conduct of Osberne had so greatly agitated him, that it was near robbing him of existence.

" While I was thus deliberating what to do, I beheld my father approaching me. To fly, was impossible, he had already seen me. You may judge of his astonishment, when on coming up, he saw me standing by the emaciated figure of St. Clair.

" Good Heavens!" said he, " What

Agnes, is the meaning of this? How came St. Clair in this situation?" My agitation was so great that I could not reply; St. Clair was unable.

" Some peasants who had been cutting wood in the forest now passed by, and my father ordered them to convey St. Clair to his castle. By degrees he recovered, yet he never spoke to me of love.

" One day, as he was sitting in my father's apartments, a messenger brought him a letter, which having read, he seemed first to be much pleased with, but afterwards, he dissolved in tears. That letter, as I afterwards learnt, was from Osberne, acquainting him that he had taken the vow of celibacy, and had entered into the order of the Knights of the Forest; and that therefore he could never interfere in St. Clair's love for me.

In a few days, he gradually recovered his spirits, and with a delicacy that interested me, questioned me about the state of my heart.

“ Considering too, that Osberne had rendered my union with him impossible. I gradually weaned him from my mind, and in which, the idea that I was conducting myself according to the wishes of my father greatly assisted me ; from that time, Osberne never wrote ; and St. Clair, at length by his gentle assiduities gained my esteem, and also my love. At that time I was very young, and as my sentiments for Osberne had not been of long duration, they took the less hold on my heart. St. Clair drew from me my consent to a union, and shortly after, we were united, alas ! to part too soon. The packet of letters which you burnt, must have been some I wrote to Osberne. And the case, I

little doubt, by his making you promise so solemnly not to open it, contained my miniature.

“ To be sincere, I loved Osberne, and beheld his generous act with the most heartfelt distress, yet when I reflected on the impossibility of our union without being guilty of disobedience to a parent whom I loved, I by degrees reconciled myself in some measure to his departure. I reflected that the conduct of St. Clair, had been equally as noble as Osberne’s ; and had St. Clair addressed me first he would have possessed the same place in my affections as Osberne did.”

Thus the Lady Agnes finished the little tale, and the meridian sun darting his sultry beams on the earth, the ladies attended by Edmund, returned to the castle, when they proceeded to the apartment. But Edmund again directed

his steps to the forest, that he might in its silent haunts muse on the joyous prospect that was now opening to his view, and prayed that no gloomy mist might arise to cloud the horizon of his fond expectancies.

CHAP. LII.

EDMUND, indulging the enraptured sensations of his heart in the gloomy shades of the forest, had wandered as far as the beautiful valley, and was enjoying the delightful and romantic scenery which presented itself to his view. He looked on the waters, as, rushing from the summit of the hill, they dashed down the craggy rocks ; here forming a smooth sheet ; there the white foam sparkling in the beams of the sun. At the bottom of the valley appeared the stream gliding through the over-hanging branches of the trees, that

thickly lined its verdant sides. The silence that pervaded the scene was only interrupted by the dashing of the waters, and the unceasing song of the feathered race. No busy cry of man broke on the tranquillity.

Edmund's heart, filled with a delicious languor gazed on the charms of nature. He threw himself down on the bank, and mused in silence on love and Anna.

While he was thus employed, a rustling among the bushes behind him made him start up; and a form cased in armour, with a drawn sword, rushed on him, and ere he could avoid the fell intentions of the unknown assailant, he struck him so violent a blow on the light casque he wore, that it split; and Edmund, who had just got on his feet, staggered with the force of the blow,

and, but for a tree which supported him, must have fallen.

Hastily he drew his sword, and luckily warded off the second blow which his adversary directed at him. He now began to recover from the surprise and agitation he had been thrown in from the sudden attack. He found his vigilance was unable to parry the savage thrusts of his opponent, and he was wounded in the side. Irritated by the sight of his blood, which trickled down his clothes, he rushed on the knight, and raising his sword, aimed a furious blow at his helmet ; but he avoided it by turning his head on one side : the sword, however, descended on the shoulder, and penetrating the joints of the armour, inflicted a deep cut.

Edmund dragged out his sword, and again wounded his adversary, whose arm

now hung useless, and he dropped on the earth. Edmund ran up, and attempted to take away his sword; but which the knight endeavouring to prevent, and in the contest, which was on the verge of a deep slope that formed one side of the valley, the knight fell over, and Edmund beheld his form rolling down the declivity; till at length coming against a tree, the further progress of the body was stopped.

Edmund descended the hill by a small winding path; and coming up to his adversary, he observed that he faintly moved: his sword had fallen from his hand in the descent, and Edmund unlaced his helmet, which he took off; but started back with horror, when it disclosed the ferocious countenance of Sir Orlando de Vortimer.

His eyes were fixed on Edmund, and

their horrible expression, with the savage grinding of his teeth, shewed at once the torture of his body and the rage of his mind. He was unable to speak ; the wound he had received in his shoulder was greatly enlarged by his fall, and bled profusely ; and where his body had struck against the tree, it seemed to be dreadfully hurt.

Edmund dragged him from the tree, and setting him up against a bank, looked around for assistance. No one, however, appeared ; he therefore began to unbuckle the other parts of his armour, when De Vortimer in a furious voice said, “ Touch me not, thou minion of fortune ! ’Tis some comfort, however, that I see thy blood. Would I had killed thee, then I had died happy ; but now, oh, how I am tortured ! Furies, ten thousand furies seize my soul ! See, Hildargo from that dark

gulph grins at me ! Hold off, thou fiend !—fix not thy sharp talons in my heart ! Ha ! I burn ! Oh, horrible, horrible, dreadful agony !”

Edmund gazed with horror at Sir Orlando. He now stopped, fatigued with his exertions, while his bloodshot eyes rolled about with an expression too dreadful to be described. At length they fixed on Edmund.

“ Out of my sight, thou curse of my existence ! I would plunge into the bottomless gulph of hell itself to avoid thee ! Devils, take him from my sight, and I am yours for ever !” Torrents of blood gushed out of his wound. Raising himself up, with a furious effort he cast himself from the place he was reclined on, down into the stream below.

Edmund watched the body bounding down the rough sides of the steep

on which he stood ; now it fell into the waters, which dashed up a white foam, covered the surface, and marked where it had fallen ; shortly after it disappeared, and now the gentle waves rolled unconscious over the place where lay the inanimate form of Sir Orlando.

Edmund now felt himself faint with the loss of blood ; and with some difficulty, (for the exertions opened his wound,) he ascended up the hill, and supporting his steps on his sword, arrived at length at the castle. Entering the gates he met Constantine, and leaning on his arm, he passed through the well-known passage to the chapel, through which he proceeded to his apartments, for he was fearful of crossing the courtyard, lest he should be seen by any of the domestics, who might alarm his mother or the Lady Anna.

Arrived at his chamber, he threw off

his clothes, and Constantine examining the wound, found, to his great joy, that no danger need be apprehended from it; the sword of Sir Orlando had touched a rib, which fortunately impeded its progress into his body, but running along the bone, it had made a large wound, which bled greatly with the exertions he had been obliged to make.

Edmund, lying on his couch, Constantine soon stopped the effusion of the stream of life, and then watched his master with great solicitude. In less than an hour the faintness ceased, and Edmund felt himself getting better.

Unwilling to disclose the occurrences of the morning to any one, he for a long time deliberated on what steps he should take to conceal his wound; and he determined to attend as usual at the repast. Constantine endeavoured to

persuade him to remain in the chamber, but he persisted in his resolution, and when the banquet hour approached, he got off his couch, and entered the hall.

The ladies soon noticed his pallid countenance, and the difficulty with which he moved. Anna, greatly alarmed, asked him the cause, but he affected to smile at their ideal fears, and replied, that he was only fatigued by the long walk he had taken.

The Lady Agnes, however, saw that something had occurred ; and taking his hand, "Conceal not from me, my dear Edinund," said she, "what it is that causes you to look so unwell ? Oh, Heavens !" said she, seeing a spot of blood which accidentally had fallen on his clothes. " You have been wounded. Tell me, Edmund, is it not so ?"

Edinund now foresaw that the fears of

his mother would make it impossible for him to conceal what he had done, and he briefly related the death of Sir Orlando de Vortimer.

The Lady Agnes dropped a tear at his wretched end. She could not feel sorry for the death of a man, who had been the cause of so much misery to her. She could have wished that he had suffered from any other hand than that of her son ; but the certainty that Edmund could not have acted otherwise than he did in defence of his own life, afforded some consolation to her mind.

The repast was soon concluded. The Lady Agnes, from the distress occasioned at the manner Sir Orlando met his death, and Anna's great anxiety respecting Edmund's health, drove away the calls of hunger, and Edmund was too unwell to need any thing but repose.

Lady Emilia and the Baron de Hertford, partook of the grief of the several parties, and a gloomy silence prevailed that day at Manstow.

Edmund retired to his couch; rest recruited his strength; and when he arose the next morning, he felt but little inconvenience from his wound.

Anna was greatly pleased to see him enter the hall, and to behold the pale rose just opening on his cheeks. The Lady Agnes entered in a robe of sable velvet, and tenderly embraced her son Edmund, who had the pleasure of passing that day in company with his adored Anna, and the attention she paid him contributed greatly to his recovery.

The next day he was able to walk out,

and he took an opportunity, as soon as he was able to sit on his horse, to take a party of the domestics, and to shew them where the body of Sir Orlando lay entombed in the stream.

With some difficulty they got it up, an placing it on a bier, carried it into the chapel through the western portico. There it was laid, with a pall of black velvet thrown over it, till the coffin could be got ready. The features still preserved the same horrible appearance as they had assumed when he precipitated himself into the stream.

When the armour was taken off, it was found that the ribs had been broke by the tree which stopped the course of the body as it was rushing down the hill.

Preparations were made for the fune-

ral, and at midnight the Baron de Hertford, (for neither the Lady Agnes nor Edmund wished to attend,) saw the remains of Sir Orlando de Vortimer encased in the marble repository of his ancestors.

Thus ended the ill-spent life of Sir Orlando, part of whose vices we have endeavoured to relate; and it will be seen that in no way did his vile intents succeed; they were constantly baffled by the All-seeing eye of Providence; and at length, after a series of events, he terminated his existence, not supplicating a merciful Providence to receive his repentant soul, but calling on the demons of darkness, and giving himself up to the common enemy of mankind. A dreadful and important lesson to all those who endeavour, by base and vicious acts, to attain their ends, which always terminate in destruction and misery.

When Sir Orlando de Vortimer, from the ramparts, beheld the destruction of the barbacan, and Edmund rushing over the flaming ruins, a sudden fear seized his mind, and calling Ugo to him, whom he knew he could repose confidence in, he quickly descended from the ramparts, and proceeded towards the chapel.

He had discovered, when he was traversing the cemeteries of the castle of Manstow, an extensive place, which was hewn out of the rock. The door, when closed, was made to resemble the wall ; and but for the circumstance of its being open, he would not have discovered it. A flight of steps at one end led to a small pannel, which he unbolted, and found himself in the wood behind the castle. The entrance to this subterraneous chamber was hid by the surrounding underwood, part of which he was obliged to cut away to make a passage for himself.

He saw that here he might securely secrete himself, should it ever be necessary for him to do so, and from time to time he made Ugo convey to the chamber, provisions, and whatever else he might stand in need of.

To this place he now went with Ugo, and emerged from his secret residence from time to time, to hear what was going forward. He entertained hopes that should he destroy Edmund and Sir William Gaveston, he would yet be able to effect his designs on the Lady Anna, as he could enter the castle whenever he pleased, and bear her away even from her chamber. With this view he constantly counselled with Ugo on what steps he should pursue.

Ugo and himself were always on the watch, in hopes of being able to surprise Edmund alone in the forest. Fortu-

nately, however, for Edmund, that opportunity never occurred. When he heard of the tournament, he then commissioned Ugo to endeavour to watch the steps of Edmund. And when he was going out on this expedition, Sir Orlando put a paper in his hand, in which was enclosed a valuable jewel, and in which he directed him to endeavour to combat with Edmund at the tournament, and to use a sharp-pointed lance, in hopes of slaying him in that base manner ; the failure of his attempt, and the destruction he brought on himself, has been stated.

On the afternoon of that day, De Vortimer heard a noise in the cemetery, and cautiously opening his door, saw, at a distance, some men digging a grave ; advancing nearer, what was his vexation on finding, by the conversation of the men, that it was his agent Ugo, who

was no more. Soon after he saw Edmund approaching, and the men bearing the body of his ill-fated domestic. Almost mad with rage, he was on the point of rushing forwards, and plunging his sword into the body of Edmund ; but the certain fate that would attend such an exposure of himself alone prevented him.

On the morning, which proved fatal to him, he observed Edmund walking with the Ladies Anna and Agnes. Distracted at the sight, for he read in the countenances of Edmund and Anna that mutual love occupied their hearts, he would instantly have attacked them, but they were then too near the castle. He afterwards saw Edmund return to the forest ; and, following his steps, seeing his intended victim was unarmed, save his casque and sword, he doubted not but he should obtain an easy conquest.

When he beheld him stretch himself on the grass, he advanced, and pressing through the underwood, endeavoured to terminate his existence, by suddenly attacking him, little thinking that they are thrice armed who look up to Providence for protection.

Mortimer de Veseri having settled all the affairs relative to the barony and estates attached to St. Clair, returned to Manstow, unhappy at being absent from his dear master. Edmund was delighted to see this truly faithful friend, and recounted to him all the events that had taken place since he had left him in Bretagne.

Mortimer was highly delighted at the death of Sir Orlando; and when he heard that Sir Edmund's marriage with the Lady Anna only waited the consent of the Lady Gertrude de Percy, he lifted

up his aged hands, and, in a transport of joy, exclaimed, “When I have seen that day I shall have lived long enough.”

The Lady Emilia, who, during the day, heard Mortimer speaking to Sir Edmund, started at the sound of his voice, and turned pale. She recollects to have heard such a one before on a solemn occasion ; and the more she heard Mortimer’s voice, the more it recurred to her memory. She determined to satisfy herself, and took an opportunity to send for Mortimer, on pretence of making some enquiries about her father’s castle. After she had put some trifling questions to him, she said, “Tell me, good Mortimer, did I ever hear your voice before in the castle-hall ? It seems familiar to me.”

Mortimer appeared somewhat confused ; “I cannot deny it, lady,” said he, “I pray you, pardon me.”

"Pardon you, Mortimer," said Emilia, "how can I be sufficiently grateful to you for having preserved me from such an abyss of misery? But I pray you to relate the particulars."

Mortimer then informed her of the part he had taken in endeavouring to rescue her from the certain misery that he well knew awaited her in a union with Sir Orlando.

When he had finished his tale, the Lady Emilia thanked him afresh for his great services; and presenting him with a small case, requested him to accept it. Mortimer, however, refused the valuable gift. "The happiness of having met your approbation, lady, is sufficient recompence for Mortimer de Veseri; and I pray Heaven that in Sir William Ga-veston you may find the very opposite to the base Sir Orlando de Vortimer."

This said, he bowed and retired, and left the Lady Emilia absorbed in wonder at the conduct of the old man, who seemed to be actuated by no other motive than the desire of doing good.

The Baron de Hertford also recollect-
ed the voice of Mortimer, and men-
tioned the circumstance to his daughter,
who explained to him the part Mortimer
had taken in the mysterious transactions
at the chateau de St. Clair, concealing,
however, that which related to the con-
sent she had given to be privately mar-
ried to Sir Orlando.

The Baron was much delighted with
the conduct of the good steward Mor-
timer, which had preserved his daughter
from the misery that would have awaited
her in a union with Sir Orlando.

In searching the apartments of De

Vortimer some papers were found, which appeared to have been a correspondence between him and Hildargo, after he had left the chateau de St. Clair to be the gaoler of the unfortunate Lady Agnes.

LETTER I.

LAST night, a dreadful storm has rendered the old mansion I am in, uninhabitable : more than one half was blown down. I was precipitated from a great height, and am very much hurt ; my charge, however, is safe. A corner of her chamber remained in its place ; and there I found her in the morning. To stay here longer, will be impossible. I am surprised you have not sent me any money ; I am without resources.— Let me know what I am to do, by my messenger.

HILDARGO.

LETTER II.

YOUR Letter has distressed me, father; What can I do? I will relate a circumstance that lately happened, which has terrified me beyond expression—the demons of darkness are in league against me.

You know, father, the Lady Emilia de Hertford, young and beautiful—possessed of a large estate: I endeavoured to gain her affections, and succeeded. The baron wished to see the titles to the estates—I complied; and was stating to him how they came into my hands, when a hollow voice, which seemed to be in the chamber, twice proclaimed what I had said to be false. This was not imagination. In the evening, oh! I cannot bring my pen to relate it.—It was horrible indeed. The marriage

was, however, soon after agreed on; and I trusted to have had it in my power to have made you an ample recompence for the trouble you have taken on my account. But the old baron again demanded, the day before the union, to see the papers; and when I went to take them from the secret place (where I trusted they were secure), they were gone; yes, father, they had been taken away. Greatly agitated, I returned to the room, and made some excuse; and he then requested to see the will—some devil told him to do it. I was confused; with difficulty I uttered some incoherent sentences, when the mysterious voice bade him notice my agitation. It was too much; I dropped on the floor insensible, and the baron left me. Soon after, he wrote me word that he had changed his mind respecting the marriage. Thunderstruck at this, I contrived to see Emilia; and I obtained

her consent to a private union ; when the form of St. Clair, clad in armour, rushed between, and forbade us.

When I came to my recollection, Emillia was no where to be found ; and the next morning, I received a letter from her, saying, that she had changed her mind respecting the marriage.

I am now almost without money, and am on the point of setting out for Manstow castle. The enclosed is all I can spare. I shall scarcely have enough to carry me to England—the loss of the papers has ruined me ; but I regret it the more, as I shall not be able to recompense you, my dear father, as I wish. As soon as you arrive in England, dispatch a messenger to Manstow castle, and I will give you directions what to do.

ORLANDO.

LETTER III.

As you wished, I have brought the Lady Agnes to England. We have had a dreadful storm.—You must send me more money.—Your last letter surprised me; not at the circumstances, but that you should for a moment believe in supernatural events. The church will endeavour to make you do so; but do not: you have been made the sport of your secret enemies. Did you ever hear of an immaterial substance wearing armour? Only think of the absurdity of the idea for a moment. Pardon my warmth—where have you so sincere a friend, as

HILDARGO.

LETTER IV.

Dear Father,

PERHAPS you are right. We will discuss that subject when we meet:—come to Manstow at night. The messenger will direct you where you are to bring the car. I have discovered a place in the dungeons that will exactly answer our purposes. Sir Willoughby has acceded to my request, that you should supply the place of the late confessor. So far, all is well:—I have views here, my friend, more advantageous to us, than twice the Lady Emilia's property;—the heiress of Manstow. If I am successful, every wish of your heart shall be gratified. I shall expect you on the fifth evening from this.—Accept the enclosed; would I could add more—you know my heart, father.

I want your counsel now more than ever I did ; here is a glorious opportunity : should we succeed, we shall enjoy the luxuries of the East, and rapacity itself will be sated. I wait with impatience your arrival :—we are now in a new world ; Sir Willoughby seems greatly attached to me. If I am successful in gaining the heart of Anna, you can clear away the obstacles of the near relationship ; and I am certain of her father's consent. Adieu.

ORLANDO.

These letters proved the baseness of Sir Orlando's heart ; but now that he had suffered for his crimes, they made no observation on them ; but committed to the flames, the proofs of his villainy.

CHAP. LIII.

SIR WILLIAM GAVESTON proceeded quickly to Percy castle. When he arrived there, the Lady Gertrude received him in the hall. “I am come, lady,” said he, “to pay my respects to you on the lovely charge, with which the king, jointly with your ladyship, has honoured me.”

“I am happy, Sir William, to behold you beneath the walls of Percy castle. How is the fair Lady Anna?”

“She charged me with her most respectful remembrances,” replied Sir Wil-

liam ; “ as did also Sir Edmund, who with his mother, the Lady Agnes, resides at Manstow. I come also a suitor from Sir Edmund to you, lady.”

“ From Sir Edmund ! What is the favour he asks ? ” replied the Lady Gertrude.

“ No less a one than your consent to his marriage with the Lady Anna. The attachment is mutual, Sir Edmund has been restored to his titles, with an additional grant of territory, and has received great honours from the king ; added to that, the Lady Anna owes, in all probability, her life to him : his family is of illustrious origin, and of his gallant actions my existence is a proof, for he saved my life at Manstow.”

“ I see, Sir William,” said the Lady Gertrude, that he has a warm advocate

in you, and as you say that the king has conferred many marks of distinction on him, although his family is certainly not of such great antiquity as the De Vor-timers ; I do give my free consent."

Delighted to hear this, Sir William bowed, and then declared his intention of setting out immediately ; but the Lady Gertrude requested he would stay that night at Percy castle, as she wished to write to the Lady Anna.

In the morning she delivered to him a packet, and then he took his leave, and hastened to Manstow.

Edmund was on the topmost turrets of Manstow, which overlooked a great extent of country, watching anxiously for the coming of Sir William Ga-veston.

When he saw his train winding

among the distant hills, he hastily descended, and ordering a horse to be saddled, rode off as fast as his steed would permit him towards Sir William ; who when he saw him approaching pale and agitated, spurred his horse on, and welcomed him with a smile.

“ All is as you wish, my friend,” said he. Edmund now stopped to take breath, and his face shewed how pleased he was.

“ My dear friend,” said he, “ what can I do, to repay your goodness ? The Lady Gertrude, then, has given her consent ?”

“ Most freely,” said Sir William. “ She has charged me with a packet to the Lady Anna.”

Edmund now related to Sir William the occurrences that had taken place at

Manstow, in the death of Sir Orlando. Sir William was delighted to hear that bitter enemy was no more; and now the party riding over the lawn, entered the castle.

Sir William, alighting from his steed, passed into the hall, and enquiring for the Lady Anna, requested to see her.

The blushing Anna attended soon after; and Sir William seeing the confusion she was in, presented her with the packet, and retired to his apartments, where the Lady Emilia and the Baron de Hertford were awaiting him.

The Lady Anna, on receipt of the packet, tremblingly passed on to her chamber, where she opened it, greatly agitated, lest it should contain aught that would prevent her union with Edmund.

The contents, however, gave her the greatest pleasure. The Lady Gertrude assured her niece of her consent to her marriage with Sir Edmund de St. Clair; and did not her advanced age render it impracticable, she would have visited her at Manstow. She begged her acceptance of the enclosure, and concluded by praying Heaven to bless and make her happy.

Anna was greatly delighted with this kind billet, and opening the enclosed parcel, found it to contain a suit of diamonds of great value for her wedding ornaments.

Edmund, who had beheld the Lady Anna retire from the hall with the letters from the Lady Gertrude, waited a long time there, in hopes she would return. But the evening now closed in, and a gloom enveloped the hall; he,

however, still continued walking in it, with his arms folded, to a late hour, when weary, he sought his chamber.

Anna the next morning repaired to the apartment of the Lady Agnes, and related to her the letter her aunt had sent. Agnes heard with delight the welcome tidings, and soon after they descended to the hall, where Edmund was walking, agitated and restless, till he had seen the Lady Anna.

He instantly advanced to her; and the Lady Agnes left the lovers alone, and passing to another part of the hall, surveyed the different trophies which thickly lined the pillars and walls.

“Dearest Anna”, said Edmund, “how delighted I am to hear that the Lady Gertrude approves of our intended union. Will you, sweet angel,” said

he, kneeling before her, and taking her hand, “ will you, lovely Anna, complete my happiness; but, oh, what a cold word is that to express what I feel ; will you, dear idol of my adoration, name a day when you will bless your Edmund at the altar, with all he adores, with what will make him the most envied of mortals, your lovely self.”

Anna anticipated what Edmund was going to request, she blushed—her hand trembled—she averted her face, while Edmund at her feet, awaited in fond expectancy, her answer. “ Dear Anna,” said he, in a supplicating tone, “ do answer me.”

“ How can I fix the time ? ” said the Lady Anna in a faint voice ; “ Ask Sir William.”

“ And will you, dearest Anna,” said

Edmund, "consent to be mine the day he shall appoint?"

"Yes, Edmund, with pleasure, I will do whatever he shall advise."

Edmund in speechless ecstasy kissed her hand, and Anna, who so sincerely, so tenderly loved Edmund, gently pressed his, and sought the Lady Agnes.

Edmund, walking by her side, could only talk to her of the dear subject that possessed his heart; his love and adoration for her, nor was that subject displeasing to Anna, who listened with delight, and thus passed the time which flew on wings of joy and happiness, till at length Anna retired to her apartments.

Edmund instantly proceeded to seek Sir William Gaveston, to whom he im-

parted the speech and resolution of the Lady Anna.

" My dear friend," said Sir William, smiling, " I can well judge of your solicitude to put it out of fortune's power to deprive you of the lovely Anna ; but you will however see the necessity of my waiting on the king, to inform him how soon I am to be deprived of the honorable trust he reposed in me, by making me guardian to the Lady Anna. Suppose, then, I fix on the seventh day from this. I think in five days I shall be able to return, and some short time will be necessary to make preparations for the ceremony."

Edmund, who was fearful when Sir William mentioned the necessity of his waiting on the king, that a long time would elapse before the blissful day should arrive, waited with anxiety the

termination of his speech, and felt relieved when he found that in seven days, he was to call the lovely Anna his. He gratefully pressed Sir William's hand, for his manifest desire of serving him ; and Sir William Gaveston endeavoured to prove by his conduct how grateful he was for the eminent services performed by Edmund.

Sir William now went to seek the Lady Anna, to acquaint her with what he had mentioned to Edmund, and the time he had fixed on for the marriage, who received the intelligence with a becoming modesty of demeanour, and felt relieved when Sir William's absence spared her the trouble of endeavouring to conceal the dye of maiden blushes.

Sir William now departed from Mans-tow, and at the close of the second day arrived in the city of London. The

next morning he made his appearance at court ; and the king, who had often employed Sir William on affairs of moment, called him by his name, and demanded if Sir Orlando had been found.

Sir William then related to the monarch the whole of the transactions of De Vortimer from the time he was missed, and the manner of his death. The king listened with great attention, and then demanded where Sir Edmund was ; to which Sir William replied : “ My liege, he is now at Manstow castle, a suitor for the fair hand of the Lady Anna de Vortimer ; and the purport of my appearance at your majesty’s court, is to acquaint you that I shall shortly resign the fair charge your majesty honored me with, to his hands.”

“ I am well pleased,” replied the king, “ that the Baron Edmund de St.

Clair has made so fair a choice, for I have heard report speak largely of the virtues of the Lady Anna ; and since he is so minded, and as the barony of Manstow, by the death of Sir Willoughby without male issue, has returned on our hands, we will confer it on St. Clair, and request you to be the bearer of our royal letters to that effect."

Sir William Gaveston, greatly pleased, bowed low to the king, who further requested him to say to Sir Edmund, that he meant it as a wedding present.

Sir William now only waited till the royal grant should have the king's seal affixed to it ; and when that was done, he took his leave of the monarch :—and well knowing how anxious Edmund would be for his return, he set forward from London that evening, and proceeded on his way till night enveloped the

earth in dusky robes ; he then took up his abode at a cottage, and as soon as the next dawn peeped over the eastern hills he arose, and his attendants getting ready their horses, he again set out, often thinking how pleased Edmund would be at the mark of favour which was conferred on him, and which he knew had been greatly the wish of his heart.

That night he rested at the castle of a friend ; and the next day, when the sun was shaping his course down to the western ocean, he rode through the gates of Manstow castle.

CHAP. LIV.

WHILE preparations are making at Manstow for the solemnization of the marriage, we will follow the steps of the Signora Rosalia de Gondoni, who, as soon as she had received the narrative of the vile schemes of Molini, instigated by a desire of punishing him for his villainy, determined to set forward to Naples, and to lay before the court, the papers, in hopes that they would cause some inquiry to be made into the circumstances.

Taking with her a peasant called Oliver, of whose honesty and fidelity she was

assured, she began her journey. In four days she safely landed on the shores of Bretagne, and, hiring a guide, set forward on her adventurous undertaking.

As nothing particular occurred during her harassing journey, we shall not here relate it. She enjoyed the romantic scenery through which she passed; the bold mountains of the Pyrennees, and their luxuriant vales, attracted her admiration; 'twas "Beauty sleeping in the lap of horror."

When she arrived on the verge of the Neapolitan territory it was near evening. Justine, the guide, who rode before, turned round. "Signora," said he, "there is some poor wretch dying in the road, I hear the groans." Rosalia listened; the moans were distinctly heard. "Do good Justine," said she, "ride forward, and see who it is." Justine

whipped his mule; and riding on a little way, stopped, on perceiving the body of a man lying by the side of the road. He got off his mule, and advanced to the poor wretch, who was groaning dreadfully. Rosalia now came up, and directed Oliver and Justine to raise him up.

When she looked at his face she started back with horror; the hollow eye, the wan cheek, and the shrunken limbs, proved that the unhappy object before her was perishing for want. Some provisions yet remained in the wallet of Oliver, and a flask of wine, some of which they poured down his throat. The warmth of the wine began to revive him, and he slowly opened his eyes. As soon as he was able he expressed his thanks to Rosalia for her goodness, and eat with a greedy avidity the provisions which were set before him.

The dusky hue of evening was now condensing into the gloom of night. Rosalia was perplexed what she should do with the man ; for to leave him there would be inhuman, as he would doubtless, not live out the night.

While she was ruminating in her mind what she was to do, Oliver, calling her by her name, “ begged to know if he should ride on to see if there was any cottage near the place.”

The man now appeared greatly agitated. “ By what name,” said he to Oliver, “ did you call the signora ?” “ Her name is Gondoni,” replied Oliver.

“ Oh Heavens !” said he, “ is it possible, then I shall die content.” Rosalia, hearing this, came up and asked him the cause of his exclamation.

"Are you, signora," said he, "related to the unfortunate Gondoni, who suffered for having murdered his son?"

"Alas!" said Rosalia, "I am his hapless daughter."

"His daughter! Oh, Dio!" said the man, and fell back insensible on the earth.

Rosalia, astonished at his words, directed the men to assist him, and if possible to convey him to some hut where he might be recovered; for she was anxious to know what caused him to express himself so forcibly.

Oliver, as soon as the man was sufficiently recovered, set him upon his mule, and walking by his side, they proceeded on their road; the guide riding forward to find out a hut; which at length hav-

ing discovered, he came back to inform the Signora Rosalia.

When they arrived there, she ordered the dying wretch to be taken care of, and to have nourishing provisions immediately given him. This, with the comforts of a bed; made the man able to converse the next morning; and then Rosalia demanded what it was that had so greatly agitated him. When she resolved his question as to her relationship to the Signor Gondoni, "I know, signora," replied the man, "that you will curse me; but I am resolved to do one act of justice before I die. In me you behold the assassin who was hired by Molini to destroy your brother."

Rosalia uttered an involuntary scream, and turned away from the sight of the miserable wretch; while the man remained silent for some time.

" It is in my power at length," he said, " to render justice to you, should I live, by accusing Molini of the crime for which the innocent Gondoni suffered. My life is now drawing near its close ; and I shall die happy if I am the means of restoring you to your rights, of which you have been so cruelly deprived.

Rosalia, when she had in some measure composed her agitations, began to reflect that she had now the means in her power of doing away the stigma attached to her innocent parent ; and considered it as a most fortunate circumstance her having met with the very person who would render easy the difficulties she had to encounter in her endeavours to criminate Molini.

She now drew up a petition to the Neapolitan monarch, that she might be

allowed to enter the kingdom from which her family had been banished, as she could bring forth full proofs of her father's innocence of the crime for which he suffered ; and at the same time accused Molini of the murder of her brother.

The king, desirous of rendering justice to Rosalia, gave her permission to come to Naples to make good her charge against Molini, whom he issued orders to have taken up.

Rosalia instantly sat out, bringing with her Giovanni, the assassin employed by Molini, and soon arrived at Naples ; where being examined, she produced in the first instance the narrative of Pierro, at which the judges expressed great surprise. She then requested a pardon for Giovanni, in consideration of his coming forward to accuse Molini. This was

with difficulty obtained ; and a day was appointed to examine into this mysterious affair.

Molini having carried into effect his cruel designs against Gondoni, and sated his murderous revenge, rejoiced in the secrecy with which the whole affair was conducted.

Many years had now transpired since those black occurrences had taken place, and Molini had nearly forgot them, when he was seized, and conveyed to the state prison by order of the king.

It was then that Molini began to fear that a discovery had been made, for he well knew, that excepting that circumstance, he had not committed any thing which could subject him to his present seizure, and trembling with fear, he was conducted to the court.

When he beheld Giovanni there, his countenance grew pale ; he saw that justice had at last reached him. He however persisted in denying the crime imputed to him, and Giovanni being called, thus explained the transactions to the judge :

" It is now about sixteen years ago, that I belonged to a banditti, who inhabited the ruins of Sporzzini. The Signor Molini came to me, and offered me a large sum of money on condition I would do as he should direct me. I knew perfectly well what he meant, and accepted the present. He informed me then that I was to watch the motions of the young Gondoni, and assassinate him. This horrid act I performed ; and assisted by Molini, we took the body at midnight to the garden of Gondoni's house. Molini then forced open a door, and having a lamp, he lit it, and bid

me follow him. Leaving the body, we cautiously descended into the vaults beneath the house; and in one of them, Molini fixed on to inter the body. In retracing our steps in the garden, we found a spade, and Molini and myself carried the body to the vault, where I dug a grave, and the young Gondoni was laid in it. Molini then drew a dagger from his vest, which he plunged into the body, and left it there. I was much surprised at this circumstance, but however did not at that time make any observations on it. We left the house, and got out of the garden unperceived. Molini then had a mask made to imitate the young Gondoni's countenance, and with a wound painted in his side. I was to enter Signor Gondoni's house at night, and to appear beside the couch of his confessor, who resided in it. This was a service of some danger; but in consequence of a second present from

Molini, I undertook it. I however was well armed, that in case it should be necessary, I could defend myself. The scheme succeeded. I got at last the father, by signs, to accompany me to the vaults below, and uttering a deep groan, I pointed to the grave, where lay the victim of Molini's revenge, and instantly drew back to an adjoining vault. Every thing turned out as Molini could wish. The father having raised the ground, discovered the body and the dagger, on which was the name of Gondoni. This dagger was to shew who had been the murderer. I went again the next night, and appearing to the father as the spectre of the young Gondoni, conjured him to bring to punishment the author of my death, adding that the dagger would discover the assassin. Gondoni was soon after accused, and the circumstances appearing strongly to criminate him, he was executed.

Giovanni thus ended his deposition, and Molini was asked if he would confess ; this however he refused to do, and watching an opportunity, darted on the wretch Giovanni, and stabbed him twice, exclaiming, “ Thus I revenge myself of thee.”

The court was alarmed at this atrocious act. A party of the archers who attended, instantly seized and disarmed Molini at the moment he was going to terminate his own guilty existence.

The judges immediately ordered that he should die by the torture ; and Molini was dragged away to the dungeons below.

He was taken to a chamber of great extent. In the centre was a table ; at the upper end of which sat the official, who was to see the commands of the court

executed. On his right hand sat a friar, who attended on the last moments of the dying criminals; and on his left, sat a secretary, ready to note down their confessions.

The table was covered with black cloth; a large lamp, which hung over the table, dimly illumined the vast chamber, the walls of which could not be discovered.

The official, the friar, and the secretary, were habited in black robes; the familiars, who were men appointed to torture the criminals, instantly seized on Molini as he entered this chamber, and the archers, who conducted him, declaring his sentence, retired from the dreadful chamber.

Molini was now stripped of his clothes by the officials, whose arms

were bared to the shoulders, and the rest of their bodies covered with black cloth, which fitted close to them, covering their foreheads and necks, which increased the natural ferocity of their features.

A dress of black serge was then put on the body of the trembling Molini, and he was brought by the familiars to the end of the table.

The friar then admonished him to confess the crime with which he was charged ; this however he refused.

“ It may be possible you may yet be saved,” said the monk, “ should you appear penitent for the crimes with which you are charged.”

Molini, who hoped that if he did not confess, he would escape the sentence

which had been passed on him, obstinately refused to comply.

"To the torture then," said the official.

The familiars now drew Molini back and throwing him down, laid him on two cross pieces of timber, which were fastened together in the centre by an iron pin. To this, they firmly bound his legs and arms; and then opening the cross, put him to inconceivable pain. While in this situation, the monk coming up, begged him to confess. Molini, though groaning with agony, still refused.

They now unbound him from the cross, and then tied cords round his wrists, and suddenly drew him up into the air, by a rope which was run through a staple in the roof; the violence of the

motion, dislocated his arms and wrists ; the agony was horrible. Shortly after, he was let down ; and still refusing to confess, he was laid on an iron frame, and his nails tore out of his feet and hands. Still, however, he was obstinate ; and the familiars opening his mouth with an iron instrument, seized hold of his tongue, and were going to drag it out by the root. Molini then made signs, and the official commanded the familiars to cease.

“ I am guilty,” said Molini, in a voice scarcely audible ; “ have mercy on me.”

“ May that Heaven you have so greatly offended, have mercy on thee,” replied the monk ; “ and grant that your present tortures may wash away your sins.”

The familiars were then ordered to

stretch him on the rack ; and Molini, too late, found that their endeavouring to extort a confession from him, was only to satisfy themselves of his guilt, from his own mouth.

The monk now retired ; and Molini was bound to the rack ; there the dreadful agonies he endured caused his bloodshot eyes almost to start from their sockets ; his dreadful groans echoed through the extensive chamber. For some time he uttered the most terrible imprecations ; his voice now grew weak, and, at length, with a horrible groan, his soul left his tortured frame.

Thus perished Molini, sixteen years after the perpetration of the cruel act for which he suffered. But justice, though she may slumber for a while, yet at length, rouzes from her forgetfulness, and inflicts on the sinner when he least

thinks, and is least prepared for it—the due punishment of his crimes.

Giovanni whom Molini had stabbed in the court, soon after expired, and thus terminated his guilty existence. He, however, died in the execution of an act of justice, which it is to be hoped will be received as some atonement for the offences of his life.

When the king was informed of these circumstances, he immediately gave orders that the estates of Gondoni should be restored to the Signora Rosalia ; and as some trifling recompence, he added to them the estates of Molini, his family being banished from the kingdom.

Rosalia, however, in Naples, was deprived of the melancholy pleasure she took in visiting the grave of her mother ; she therefore disposed of her property,

and returned to the humble cottage. She purchased a quantity of land, and erected a superb monument over the grave of her ever-lamented parent ; and where the cottage stood, she had built a magnificent edifice ; and in continued acts of benevolence and kindness, which made her beloved by the neighbouring peasants, she passed her time in daily visiting the tomb of her mother, and causing masses to be performed in a chapel which she raised near the spot for the repose of the souls of her murdered brother, her persecuted father, and her mother whom she so greatly adored.

She, however, had not been long in her present situation ere the Lord de Beau-champ to whom the next estate belonged, saw the elegant Rosalia, and became en-amoured of her, with anxious solicitude he addressed her, and she at length consented to make him happy.

De Beauchamp, added to an interesting figure, possessed a heart endowed with virtue, and Rosalia had a fair prospect of being amply repaid in the happiness of her future existence for the miseries she had endured.

CHAP. LV.

EDMUND, with sensations of heartfelt delight, from his casement beheld Sir William Gaveston returning. He flew down the grand stairs, and entering the hall, was soon in his arms. "Sir Edmund, you see," said Sir William, "that I have been expeditious in performing my business."

" You have, indeed, my dear friend," said Edmund.

" The king," said Sir William, " was greatly pleased to hear of the intended

marriage ; and as a proof of it, here are his royal letters, creating you Baron of Manstow, in addition to the barony of St. Clair."

" Is it possible !" said Edmund, almost doubting Sir William's words ; " It must be then, owing to your kind representations, my friend, that he has granted to me this great favour."

" No, indeed," said Sir William ; " I can assure you, it was his own free act."

" This indeed is pleasing news."

" It is the very thing I wished."

" Well, my dear friend," added Edmund, " you have not changed your mind.—The day after to-morrow, is to be the joyful one of my union. "I will go and speak to the Lady Anna about

it," replied Sir Gaveston, " and I doubt not but every thing will be as you wish."

He then went to his own apartments to salute the Lady Emilia on his arrival; and after that, proceeded to the Lady Anna's.

Having knocked at the door of the suit of chambers she occupied, it was opened by the ancient Editha, by whom he sent to beg a conference with her lady.

Anna instantly attended; and Editha leaving the chamber, Sir William said, "I came to congratulate you, Lady Anna, on Sir Edmund's having obtained the barony of Manstow, which the king has been pleased to present to him."

The Lady Anna seemed to receive great pleasure from this intelligence; and Sir William Gaveston added, " You

informed Sir Edmund, lady, that you would leave it to me, to fix the day of your marriage with him ; and I accordingly appointed the seventh day from that time, which is the day after to-morrow." Anna blushed. "I hope, lady," said he, "that I have not wandered from your wishes, in what I have done." "I leave it to you, Sir William," replied Anna, in a faltering voice; "be it, when it seems best to you."

Satisfied with this answer, Sir William bowing low, departed ; and was met by Edmund, in the hall ; to whom, he imparted the acquiescence of the Lady Anna. Edmund instantly gave directions for the preparations, which he intended should be such as were fitting to his high rank and extensive possessions. And numerous invitations were immediately sent to the neighbouring nobility, to request their presence at the ceremony.

The joyful day at length arrived. The castle of Manstow shone forth resplendent with unrivalled gladness ; the peals of the merry trumpets and the hollow-sounding timbrels echoed along the distant hills ; and over the battlements of the castle waved the banners of the Lady Anna de Vortimer.

The floor of the hall was spread with costly tapestry, and a canopy of azure-coloured velvet was raised over a throne at the upper end, which was covered with crimson velvet, richly embroidered with gold.

Sofas adorned with the same costly materials were disposed about the hall for the accommodation of the visitors ; and a numerous train of domestics richly habited, attended to wait on the company.

The Baron de Hertford and the Lady Emilia first entered the hall and saluted the company ; then came Sir William Gaveston and the Baron Edmund de St. Clair ; he was habited in a crimson satin dress, embroidered with gold ; on his head he wore a golden casque, crested with a large plume of white feathers, and adorned with the bracelet, the present of the Lady Anna ; round his neck he wore the golden chain, with a small shield of the same precious metal ; and attached to a superb belt richly studded with diamonds, the invaluable sword of his father, and the parting gift of his friend Osberne.

The Lady Anna now entered, blushing like the new-blown rose, attended by the Lady Agnes, who had thrown aside her sable vestments.

She was most sumptuously attired.

A robe of white silk adorned with diamond stars, with a band of the same, shewed her fine form ; her hair, part disposed in bands, and part waving in ringlets about her ivory neck, was also adorned with diamonds, the valuable gift of the Lady Gertrude de Percy.

Edmund started forward as she entered, and handed her to the magnificent throne.

The abbot of St. Austin's monastery now entered the hall, and the enraptured Edmund taking the trembling hand of the Lady Anna, preceded by the abbot, entered the chapel, attended by the Ladies Agnes and Emillia, Sir William Gayeston, and the Baron de Hertford, followed by a numerous train of the congratulating noble visitors.

Sir William at the altar presented the

lovely Anna to the enraptured Edmund, the beauteous reward of all his worth and virtues.

The ceremony ended, the hills of Manstow shook with repeated peals of joy from the happy tenantry and vassals.

A magnificent banquet was provided for the nobles and their ladies, who thronged to congratulate the happy pair, while the hall resounded to the glad attuned harps of the minstrels.

Thus ended the eventful day which gave to Edmund the possession of the highest state of earthly happiness.

Sir William Gaveston having thus terminated his guardianship of the Lady Anna, soon after retired to his castle

with his truly amiable consort the Lady Emilia, and the worthy Baron de Hertford.

The Lady Agnes, blessed in seeing her beloved son so truly happy, continued to reside at Manstow, the delighted witness of their felicity.

The ancient Hubert returned to his cottage, and was enabled, by the munificence of the Baron Edmund to pass the remainder of his life in comfort and happiness; and the faithful Mortimer de Veseri, to whom Edmund was so greatly indebted, was honoured with the friendship of his beloved master, who appointed him apartments in the castle, and every comfort which his years and his unexampled fidelity demanded were lavishly bestowed upon him.

The Lady Gertrude de Percy some few years after the nuptials resigned her soul to Him who gave it, and left all her large possessions to the Lady Anna.

At length the virtues of the illustrious pair were transmitted to posterity in a lovely race, who emulated the bright example before them, and became the happiness and comfort of the declining years of their parents.

Here the pen pauses, after having, though imperfectly, endeavoured to shew the ultimate effects of Divine Justice, who sometimes allows to the guilty, a still remaining possibility of repentance, while to long suffering virtue it at length restores all sublunary joys, as a reward for the miseries it has endured. And as a forerunner of the immortal

happiness which awaits the votaries of
eligion in the eternal enjoyment of
celestial bliss in the bright regions
above.

THE END.

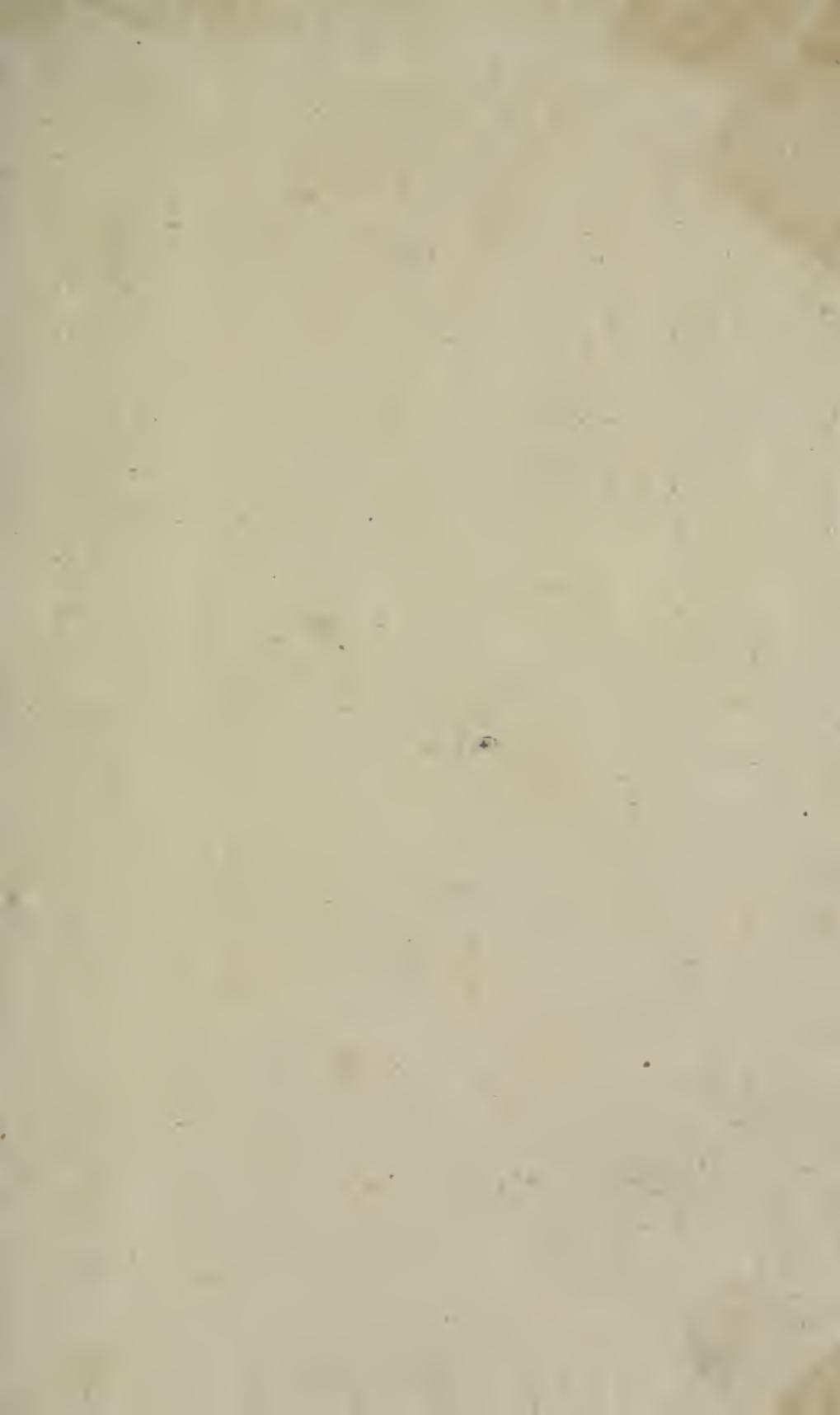
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